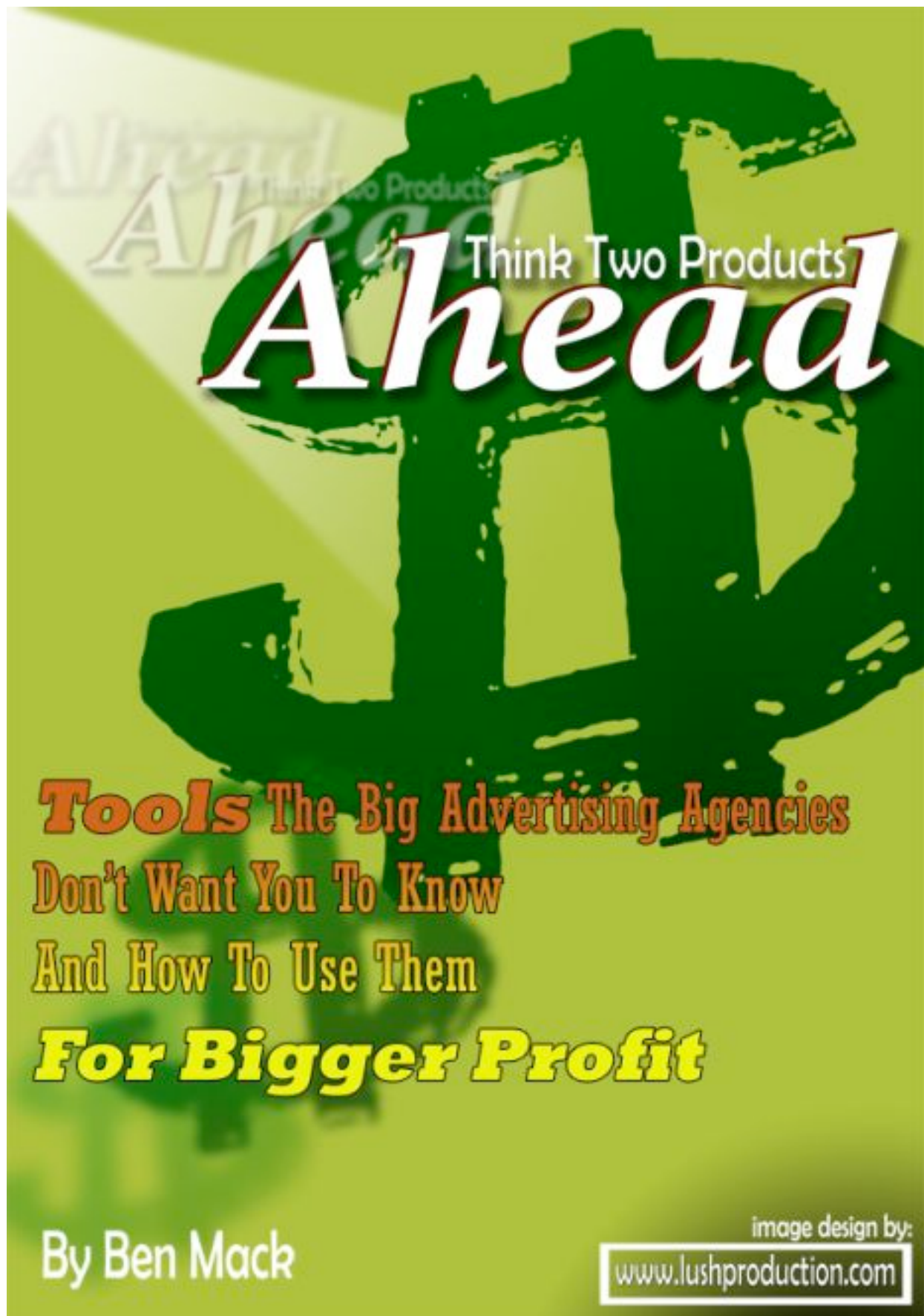




BEN MACK



Ben is author of the best selling book on fire eating ever published. He's has a cult following online because of his expertise in alternate reality marketing.

It is important that you know Ben has a hip side...because when you see his résumé on the next page you might mistake him as an academic or a suit.

He has a few remarkable credits:

- Remember when Yomega yo-yos were a \$100,000,000+ craze in '98? Ben won an AMA Effie for the strategy that brought on that phenomena
- Michael Jordan Cologne, the fastest selling men's cologne ever? Ben worked on that...you should have seen the original packaging
- Magic Castle award winning magician
- Recent Senior Vice President at BBDO, Atlanta Director of Brand Strategy on Cingular

Ben Mack, Freelance Brand Strategist

www.BenMack.com

BA, Ontology, Bennington College '94

Publications/Videos

The Great Formula; Wiley Press Spring 2006 (contributing case-study author)

What Would Bill Hicks Say?; Soft Skull Press Spring 2006 (editor)

The Pitch, Poker & The Public; shot and produced documentary to be released in 2006 by Warren Productions, interviews of marketing and persuasion masters Jay Levinson, Mike Caro, Howard Bloom and Joel Bauer

This Is Not A Game (Alternate Reality Games & Narrative Marketing); eXe Press 2005 (contributing author)

Black Book IV & V; New Falcon Press 2004/5 (contributing author)

Fire Eating: A Manual of Instruction; Dubé Press 1993, Revised edition 2000

Tablesides Tip\$, Making a Living in Magic; Magic at the Drop of a Hat Press 1989

Aristotle on Magic; Geni Magazine, May 1988

Fuller's Earth: A Day with Bucky and the Kids; St. Martin's Press 1984

Instructor—Five-day intensive seminar on applied creativity

2005-2006, Kennesaw State University, Kennesaw, GA

2005, Anahuac University, Mexico City, Mexico: Fall

Lectures

2001-2006, Anderson School of Management, UCLA

2003-2005, Goizueta Business School, Emory University

2005, Portfolio Center, Atlanta campus

2003-2004, Creative Circus, Atlanta campus

2003 International Congress on Memetics & Onto-psychology, a United Nations sponsored conference, Milan, Italy

1985, 1987, 1992, Academy of Magical Arts, The Magic Castle, Hollywood

Awards

2005 Artwork accepted into a juried show *Synergetics in the Arts* at the Noguchi Museum

1998 American Marketing Association, Silver Effie Award for Yomega Yo Yo strategy

1996 American Marketing Association, Edison Award for The Michael Jordan Cologne

1987 Academy of Magical Arts, Award of Merit

Advertising Employment	Research Employment
WestWayne, Tampa –Senior Vice President –Director of Brand Strategy, Tampa BBDO, Atlanta –Senior Vice President –Brand Strategy Director, Cingular WONGDOODY –Memeticist J. Walter Thompson, Los Angeles –Director of Account Planning Deutsch, LAX –Account Planner –Mitsubishi strategist	Lieberman Research Worldwide –Moderator (500+ groups) –Senior Project Director –100+ quantitative studies including large segmentation studies and international studies –Helped launch Lieberman Laboratory, their new product development division Robert Brilliant Market Research –Senior Sampler Grieco Research Group –Research Analyst

What the Big Ad Agencies Don't Want You to Know...

1. "Proprietary" branding schemes are all basically the same
 - Proprietary = Their template
2. Agency-lead client brainstorming sessions don't follow basic guidelines for productive ideation
 - Creativity is learnable and the basic tools are not used in most client sessions
3. Art Directors & Copywriters get raises, bonuses and job offers when they win creative awards, not when you make money

Tools to profit from these ideas...

Learn how to use Big Agency tools without paying the Big Agency. If you're hiring a Big Agency, learning these tools makes you less likely to be steam rolled by a \$5-word-spewing strategist or a chic Madison Avenue creative.

Here's the biggest secret you already know: Big Agencies make money keeping this stuff complicated. That way you have to come to them.

Branding is a dirty word to many business folks. Sure it is. They've been scorned, paying tons of money for ideas that weren't actionable and initiatives that cost more than they returned. That's not business. That's a hustle.

You shouldn't believe anything you're about to read. What follows is my perspective, based on my experience and recollections. You should not expect comparable results. I'm a lucky guy. Testing takes work. The harder I test, the luckier I get. Test these ideas and discover what magic you can create. Magic is fun. Fun is magical. That much I know. For me, the rest is just a working hypothesis.

Welcome.

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ASAP Please buy a small notebook

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As Soon As Possible...

Please buy a small notebook. This notebook will be your workbook to do the exercises at the end of the chapters. Choose whatever bound notebook you like. Mine happens to have graph paper, but traditionally lined paper or blank paper is fine. However, I suggest you own a notebook dedicated to working on your branding ideas. I want you to be more profitable by the end of this book and working on the exercises will help.



Chapter 1 Billiards & Pool Hall Wisdom

Marketing is like billiards...you're always thinking two steps ahead. In billiards, a player can keep playing so long as he sinks a ball. The real trick of the game is to ***think two shots ahead***. When beginners start thinking not just of their next shot, but two shots out, they begin to see the game differently: **what you're going to do next appears different when you begin to think two steps ahead...next doesn't mean immediately...next means in the future.**



You can take a real easy shot and then what? Maybe you're stuck. When you think two-shots shots ahead, you're planning to make a series of shots in a row, anticipating what's required to sink a few balls in a row. Maybe the shots work out as you plan, maybe you have to adjust, but I guarantee you that the more you practice thinking ahead, the more shots in a row you are likely to make.

You must have basic skills: being able to shoot the cue ball and sink balls. You can think-two-shots-ahead all you want, but if you can't sink a ball, your turn is still over.

If you are reading this marketing manual, I assume you're able to attract a customer and get a sale, or intend to master these skills soon. Learning to make a sale is critical. **This book is intended to help you grow your business. If you aren't thinking about what you're selling next...you aren't really marketing.**

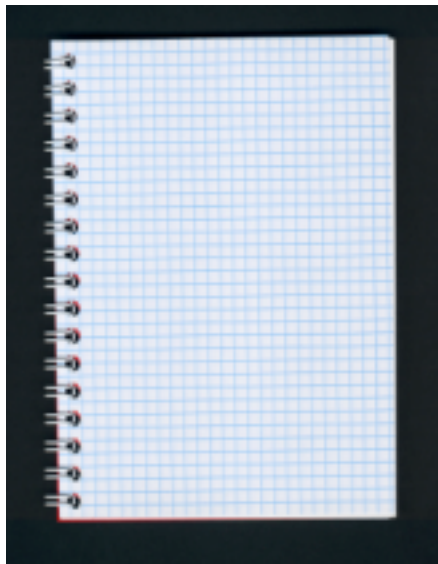
Getting the most out of each subsequent sale is branding. I know the word “branding” is a total turn-off to many marketers. Branding is a dirty word to many CFOs. This bad reputation is often well deserved. Efforts in branding are often not only a sunk cost, but a lost cause. Branding is about maximizing what you make over the long haul, about sustainably building your business. However, many branding consultants or brand managers act more like police than profit motivated business folks. For instance, a few years ago I was working on Cingular at BBDO. We planned to spend \$60,000,000 on advertising in one month, a disproportionately high budget for a month, but we were launching Rollover Minutes, a revolutionary pricing plan for wireless phones where unused minutes rollover to be used in later months.

Part of the Rollover media plan included FSIs (free-standing-inserts for newspapers) in most major and medium size cities in America—about 80 million newspapers. Two-weeks before the launch weekend there was an emergency: the color registration for nearly half these inserts was off and there was discussion about not placing these FSIs for fear of tarnishing the brand’s equity.

The shade of orange was not *that* important. What was important? A convenient way to learn the specifics about this revolutionary pricing plan, details to further explain how great Rollover Minutes really were. *When it comes to saving money* I don’t care that much about the color of the ink that teaches me how to save money.

In Chapter 2 we’ll look at the widespread misinformation around the word *brand*. Then, we’ll set about defining the word *brand* in such a way that it will help us as marketers make more money. There are a lot of people that make a lot of money off of being branding experts...it is in their interest to keep this knowledge secret...that’s why they write in argot, the funky language that only makes sense to the people that live and breathe in that expertise. But before we go there...how about using what I gave you in this chapter. Try this exercise, please...

Chapter 1 Exercise: Write down the next two purchases your customer might make from you. Now, detail what needs to happen for each of those purchases to happen.



Thank you.

It's selfish of me to ask you do these exercises. When you physically engage with these ideas you're more likely to get extraordinary value and share your experiences with friends.

In fact, you really should have a study partner. If you go into our forum you'll find folks working on this very exercise.

Why is this selfish? The more deeply you engage with this material the more likely you are to want my next product. The onus is on me to give you more value than pay...that's what will make you likely to want to keep doing business with me...you get more than you give. So please, give me a test-drive and scratch out the above exercise.

Starting the first week in June, I'll email everybody a digital copy of my personal exercises for the first three chapters. Then, three more the following week. Some folks read the book all the way through and come back and do the exercises. Suit your self. Let me know how I can help.

Chapter 2 Brand Misinformation Versus Back End Thinking

“Advertising is a seduction, not a debate.”

--David Ogilvy

“Branding is an extended seduction, not a color palette.”

--Ben Mack

Branding is often discussed as irrelevant to small business marketing. That’s bunk! If you are running a con-game, then branding is irrelevant. However, **every form of legitimate business will benefit from branding**. Branding is often described in absurd and outlandish ways. For the record, branding is:

- NOT an exact discipline
- NOT about always using the same logo or colors
- NOT about limiting yourself

Don’t use the dictionary for industry terminology.

brand (brnd)

1. *n.*
 - a. ~~A trademark or proper name identifying a product, service or a manufacturer.~~
 - b. ~~A named product or product line: a popular brand of shoes.~~

-Most American Dictionaries of the English Language, Standard Editions

Please abandon this common definition of a brand. A doctor needs a medical definition of *manic*, or he would be prescribing everybody lithium. Marketers need **a business definition of brand...**

brand (brnd)

1. *n.*
 - a. The positive or negative inclination to purchase, either in an individual or among a target audience.
 - b. The aggregation of stories and associations around a trademark, distinctive name or a product line.
2. *vt.*
 - a. To increase a target audience’s likelihood to purchase now and in the future.
 - b. To imbue positive characteristics into a marketed proposition.
3. *n.*
 - a. *Slang.* A colloquial word for a logo, product name or product line.

-Ben Mack Dictionary of My Language, First Edition

A brand is not a physical thing, but the relationship between consumers and a product or service.

In this book, product names, product logos, and the products themselves ARE NOT BRANDS. They are accessories to your relationship with a customer.

Few products really make a statement about its user. HUGE budget products can become a flag. Flag?

What do I mean by a flag...well, carrying a Heineken at a party is a flag that says you're sophisticated, or in dating terms MATURE. Holding a Corona says relaxation, that you don't have an attitude...you're chillin'. The beer you drink says something about you: at minimum it says you aren't an active member of Alcoholics

Anonymous.



You're probably not playing this kind of FLAG branding game.

Often I see the word brand bandied about as synonymous with logo. Some brand managers treat their logo like a sacred flag. I saw an off-colored logo on a weekend sales brochure and the brand manager said they didn't want to use the brochures...they told me I would NEVER hang an American flag with pink stripes instead of red and they were right. I wouldn't hang a pink American flag. I wouldn't buy a pink American flag. But, we were selling fertilizer, not flags. I would have preferred the color was perfect, but I would rather have the collateral SELLING my product than not having SALES material.

This *flag* notion of branding works for HUGE budget advertising, but it doesn't scale down to small businesses. For a "flag" to have meaning folks must recognize and agree on what a Corona means, which requires a ton of advertising. Big budget advertising can create meaning that is virtually impossible for small You're learning magic. Prepare yourself for accelerated growth. Buckle up and breathe.

budget marketers to garner outside of a very small niche audience. Corona becomes a flag that says, “I’m cool” but without using the word “cool” and seen as *cool* to a wide variety of people.

Flag branding, being able to turn your product or logo into a meaningful flag, is not a viable strategy for most advertisers. If you have that kind of budget, the rest of this book is important. But, if you don’t have anywhere near that kind of budget then what follows is even more important, because every single touch you have with your dear customer is meaningful and can substantively affect your relationship and their likelihood to buy again.

If a customer or prospect interacts with your product or your communication and is more likely to buy your product or buy your product again you are building brand equity. This is often mistaken as *likeability*. I have nothing against likeability. I just don’t think *likeability* should be an overriding business objective. Remember that *nice* guy in your high school that all the girls *liked* but none of them slept with? He may have been liked but his brand equity was squat because he could never close the deal. When Ogilvy said that advertising is a seduction he is talking about getting laid, not endless flirting. If you aren’t getting laid you aren’t seducing your prospect. If you aren’t getting sales you aren’t building your brand you’re merely buying media.

I suggest you **think of the word “brand” as the likelihood for a customer to do business with you, again.** In the next two chapters I’ll discuss nurturing a relationship with somebody you’ll never know personally. Then, *in chapter five I show you how all branding schemes are basically the same and how to use these constructs to increase retention for big and small businesses.* But, I’m not finished discussing misinformation about branding.

Branding is big business. **Millions of dollars of custom and syndicated research is sold in the name of brand planning.** If somebody sold you research or a branding process that didn’t generate more profit than it cost...I’m sorry. But, don’t throw the baby out with the bath water. There is value in branding, there’s also a ton of money wasted in the name of branding.

Before a client spends money on research I like to agree on what actions will be taken based on possible You’re learning magic. Prepare yourself for accelerated growth. Buckle up and breathe.

findings. I trust sales data more than I trust most tracking studies that report awareness levels. Tracking studies are where target customers are polled at regular intervals to measure product awareness, awareness of advertising, or to discern who's considering your product. Neat, but I've rarely seen profitable steps taken from tracking data even when glaring insights were screaming to be used. A notable exception was working on Mitsubishi with planning guru Jeffrey Blish. Usually, I see tracking data used to justify marketing inefficiencies. Our sales are down? The whole category is down!!! I've seen millions of dollars spent a year so that when sales go down somebody can reply with confidence that our sales dip is consistent with the category average.

Measuring metrics is how research companies make money...that's what they sell. Their primary job is to sell you on the importance and value of their research. When your advertising agency recommends a research company, Chances are it is owned by the same holding company as your advertising agency. For instance, BBDO is owned by Omnicom. Omnicom owns over 300 communications companies, plus DAS. Never heard of DAS? DAS is their company that helps cross sell clients between Omnicom companies. At BBDO, if I were to recommend 3 research vendors to a client, it was an unwritten expectation that at least two of them be Omnicom companies. Same with branding companies, and for good reason: if Cingular hired a branding company that wasn't an Omnicom company they would likely undermine our efforts and elaborately detail exactly what we were doing wrong...making Cingular more likely to switch advertising agencies.

Finding problems with your brand is going to happen even if the branding company is an independent and not out to undermine your ad agency. Why? Because if your brand is all-good, then they can't sell you any more services. Have you heard the expression "never take your car to a bored mechanic"? A bored mechanic is hungry for work and likely to find things wrong with your car. A branding consultant gets more money by finding things wrong with your brand so they can dive down into those issues and help you.

Research should be treated with skepticism. Research is an interpretive tool. After we launched Rollover Minutes, our second round of commercials featured a dance troop that made music on a variety of props in an engaging way with placards that touted the value of Rollover Minutes. Our market-share went up. The ads

worked. The research company conducting the tracking study, a company not owned by Omnicom, said this execution was a waste of money—one of the worst ads for the wireless category in recent years. I asked them to explain our increase in sales and increased market-share. They said it was on the strength of the product offering, of Rollover Minutes. Here's my take: the research was a telephone-interview study. The dance troop spot had very few words in the spot. When research participants were asked over the phone if they recollected a TV commercial with dancers drumming on unusual objects they said, *No*.

Conversely, we had a spot with a cute dog that would rollover every time the announcer said the word “rollover” in his voice-over. This spot scored off the charts according to their research methodology. The word “rollover” was said 17 times during a 30 second commercial. Customers remembered the commercial and stated over the phone that it made them consider shopping Cingular. Despite sales being flat, the research company released a press release stating this was the best commercial the wireless category had seen in years. Bunk! This spot just happened to test the best against their measurements. We beat the test. We scored an A, but that didn't make us money.

I'm skeptical of consultants with fancy formulas that derive brand equity. I should know. I've been one of these consultants. I'm registered to interpret data on Millard-Brown's BrandZ study, which is far better than most black-box methodologies.

I'm a huge fan of data but often, general category studies give a marketer as much data as they will ever wisely use. If your sales are plummeting and it isn't a seasonal deal...get hustling. I don't care what's happening to the rest of the category.

When I started my own research company I eventually implemented a policy of charging \$1,000 if I could talk a client out of research. I wasn't a great salesman. Often small companies would come to me wanting to invest \$20,000 in four focus groups and I would talk them out of doing research. I still wanted to be compensated for my value but many prospective clients would balk at this. So, with those clients, I became a great salesman...whatever they said they were interested in is what I told them they needed. I stopped doing this because I couldn't charge them enough for my upset stomach.

Hiring a consultant can be a great way to get somebody else to do your homework. I've been that consultant. I've been doing other people's homework since the 8th grade at John Burroughs Jr. High School when Rachel of the Miller twins batted her eyes at me. Rachel, I've learned a couple things since I was 14. Next time I'll charge you.

The successful entrepreneurs I know don't view digging through data as work. They are driven to know, understanding data is part of the processes of knowing. They either enjoy understanding the underlying dynamics of their projects or they simply can't sleep if they don't understand something. In Chapter 3 we'll look at the interconnectedness of your equities and how to strengthen their relationships.

Branding is about planning your customer's experience, about thinking with the end in mind. Branding is often referred to as big picture planning, asking where are we now, really. Then, where can we be and how do we get there. However, in order to do this kind of planning we have to have a road map of the territory.

This is a traditional purchase funnel... There are fewer and fewer customers the further down the funnel you go. If you are a Direct Response marketer this funnel changes, but arguably not that much.



Need...if a customer doesn't "need" your product, they aren't considering paying you money. Some You're learning magic. Prepare yourself for accelerated growth. Buckle up and breathe.

non-wealthy people get tripped-up on the word *need*...they argue about the fine distinction between needs and wants. Okay, but I need to make money...



Some products & services create an awareness of the need they solve...Listerine popularized the word halitosis. Whisk made people aware of ring-around-the-collar.

SafeCo wants you to know that if your auto is under-insured you could loose your house. This makes you reconsider your state of need. Are you under-insured?

Awareness...this is where a ton of money is wasted in the name of branding...on raising awareness. Don't get me started on how raising awareness is not business objective in-and-of-itself. I don't believe the formulas that claim if you raise awareness to certain levels you'll achieve certain sales...Bunk!!! Those formulas were created looking at successful products that happened to have certain levels of awareness at certain sales volumes...However, awareness does help get you sales.



Do they know your name? More importantly, will they recognize you the next they are looking to spend money? Are they aware your product fills a need of theirs? Do they think of your product first? That's called top-of-mind awareness. There's a proven correlation between top-of-mind awareness and sales...but, I see this working the other way...Top businesses are often thought of first and afford enough communications to keep them top-of-mind.

Consider...Have you ever considered buying the Publix Premium Ice Cream? I'll put their whole-bean vanilla up against any vanilla. My girlfriend, Liz Boswell won't consider eating at Taco Bell. (I just got kisses for working her name into this.)



Is your product/service being considered for their need? The customer may know they have a need...they may even be aware of your products...but, are they considering you?

Arm & Hammer has mastered inciting consideration for using their baking soda for a plethora of occasions. Can you smell anything in your fridge? It's time to use/replace your Arm & Hammer.

You don't choose whether or not you have a brand. You have a brand. You choose whether or not you manage your brand. If somebody has bought from you once, are you exploiting future possibilities? Exploit means to use fully. That's an unachievable ideal. As marketers *we should be considering how to leverage the future of our relationship with your customer*. I'm hoping you'll buy from me in the future. Heck, I'm hoping you'll buy from me right now! Are you buying what I'm talking about? Showing why some buyers choose your offering can help other prospective buyers see their need.

Interested...Are you interested in learning more? Stoking the interest of your prospect is the role of branding. Direct Response letters are the epitome of stoking interest. Traditional branders would do well to heed their tactics.



Are you attractive? Remember, this is a seduction. For some folks, a modicum of formality is required. Do you know why your offering is attractive and to whom? For others, this voice would be staid and irrelevant. Every touch, every moment somebody spends with product is part of your brand...your relationship. Is your relevance increasing or decreasing? Are you a pick-up artist prowling for a one-night-stand, or do you want a relationship? Have I told you that I love you...recently?

Search...If you're wooing a prospect and they go off searching...well, that *is* their prerogative. In fact, that's a great time for you to steal a customer somebody else has warmed up to a need you satisfy. But, it works the other way, too. Your warmed prospect goes looking for other suitors. You can't directly control the competition. And, their interaction with your customer affects your brand. What you can do is tell them what to look for. Verizon touts they have "the most reliable network." This is calculated through some obtuse formula. Research studies have shown that dropped calls are the most annoying network failure, more annoying than no reception. Cingular has the fewest dropped calls. When you're shopping for your next wireless phone, Cingular is now suggesting you consider the frequency of dropped calls while you search. I could win a beauty pageant if the qualifications for winning is being 38, pudgy, business writer, graying hair with two or more middle names. I'd be a frontrunner. If a prospect is going to go searching I hope you have told them what to look for that will make you look good. Graying hair = sophistication and experience. You ready to get down to business?

Marketing is a battle for share of wallet. In a retail store the display area is called point-of-purchase, aka POP. Online, this is your website. Direct Response marketers have this down cold. I'm amazed that POP designers aren't attending Direct Response conferences. But the real POP is the packaging...I think packaging should be called BOP, for brink-of-purchasing. The packaging should be closing the deal AND reinforcing what a fine purchase your customer has made.



The one thing you don't want them to search for is a way to give you money. Can your prospects find you easily when they're searching? How can you trump your competition? *Fewest dropped calls* really undermines *most reliable network*. Where do your prospects search out information to inform their purchase? Cell phone buyers often search for deals in the Sunday paper. Giving them a toll-free number is great. Having somebody there to answer the phone on Sunday is even better. Otherwise, they may keep on searching.

Everything that comes into a consumer's mind about your product is part of your brand...but most of the message doesn't stick. Brands are bigger than advertising or your logo or any tangible. The logo and the brand name are physical manifestations of a brand, but they are not the brand; they are accessories. Just like how a You're learning magic. Prepare yourself for accelerated growth. Buckle up and breathe.

United States flag is not the United States.

Buy...Hallelujah!

The interaction during the sale, the actual purchase, is part of the consumer's experience of your brand. A BIG PART! Cadillac dealerships used to have a "staging" area for presenting the keys to the owner. Why did they call it a "staging" area? Because a Cadillac brand manager somewhere recognized the importance of celebrating the purchase and instilling pride of ownership and a desire to have the "buying" experience again. Brilliant. Recently, a friend bought a skateboard from a BMW dealership... it was this fancy Street Carver where the wheels hug the curves and it is cool. But, at the dealership my friend had to go through the same finance office as if they were buying a car, and this finance guy was peeved about selling a skateboard that he wasn't making money on and when we left my buddy said, "I never want to go through that again." Whatever somebody is buying from you, I suggest you make buying from them a pleasure. Buying is a habit of theirs you want to encourage. Moreover, buying is a time when you can help your brand new owner become a better user. You can help them learn how to get an optimal experience from their ownership.



At point of purchase, how are you presenting yourself?

What makes buyers choose you over the other guys? Is this in print some place the consumers are reading? Does your design instill a sense of confidence? Do you have inconsistencies undermining confidence in your product?

Use...Orville Redenbacher told his patrons exactly how to pop his popcorn and they loved it. If you follow his instructions with other popcorn you get the similar results. I've tried it. I'm not convinced his popcorn is so special. He sold branded instructions.



Can you better help customers like what they get? Can you help them appreciate their value?

Are some customers happier than others? What's the difference between their experiences?

Framing the customers experience can help them more appreciate what actually happens. If just one of these ideas sparks you...and implementing this idea increases repurchase by a modest 3%, what will that mean to your overall sales? Now, what if tools to incite a 2nd and 3rd purchase allowed you to enjoy a 20% increase in sales? How much would that be worth to you?

Prefer...So far, I haven't said anything that isn't essentially available in any number of books on sales and branding, I'm just saying it simpler. That's my goal, anyway, to have a conversation with you. I think a conversational tone is an easier way to learn than being lectured at...when I lecture it reads more like a rant.

I hope my writing is useful. I hope that in the future, if you are considering two books on a subject and I wrote one that you'll choose mine.



Bonding with a product is often best achieved through emotional connections, being real and sincere. There are other strategies like exclusivity and elitism. That's more like fashion. Attitude can be fun, if you can consistently strike an emotional chord. It is tough to keep up an act. Preference has more to do with emotional bonding than with functional benefits. I'm asking you to do a lot of hard work. I hope I'm making it fun.

Loyal...Now, we're talking money. There are two basic types of loyal customers...

1. Loyal customers who will only buy you when they have a need for the type of product you are selling
2. Loyal customers who need everything you create

If you are so blessed as to have either set of loyal customers, please be nice to them. Few people can get away with continually attacking their loyal customer base. Creating a community around the loyals can help deepen the relationship. Community building is not something I can explain in great detail...I haven't studied the phenomenon.



When I want to buy an apartment building I only use Jeff Lloyd of Horizon Realty, and he charges full commission.

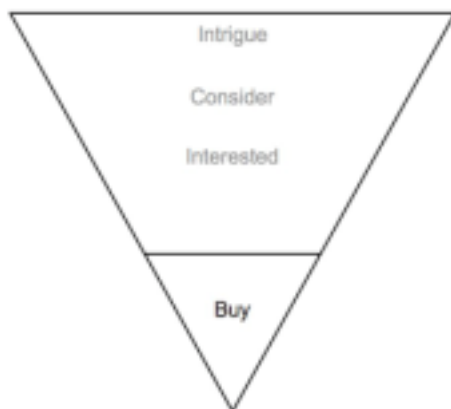
Anything Paul Auster writes I'm buying. Same goes for Kurt Vonnegut, Neal Stephenson, John Carlton and Mark Joyner. I've been waiting for Robert Anton Wilson's next book on Buckminster Fuller and memetics...I've been waiting with baited breathe. I need Scope. Maybe it goes without saying, but I hope to become your new favorite author. I'm accessible and friendly and I like puppy-dogs and long walks on the beach.

I've been studying Direct Response selling and copywriting for the last year. This book is my first foyer into DR. I'm learning hard hitting sales techniques that are blowing my hair back. I'm getting professional help as I go along. I bought John Carlton's insider seminar. I'm working in trade with Mark Joyner and Michael Morgan. I'm partnering with Sam Heyer. My mantra, be the sponge. I watch, replicate, get feedback, test, refine and repeat. I'm getting better. What fascinates me and endears me to these folks is a culture of learning, excellence and fun.

Moreover, I like the scientific method being employed. The proof of a system is in the numbers. Are more people buying with strategy A or strategy B? It astounds me that more testing is not being employed in Big Agency advertising...if you work at a Big Agency and take offense to my words, I'm sorry. I'm glad to know you *are* testing. However, when I worked in advertising what we called testing often seemed absurd to me. A real sales test is happens while people are buying, not in sterile test center. Consumers vote with their dollars and when it isn't their actual dollars I hold that only so much can be learned. Yes, pre-testing is important to uncover confusion, but the testing shouldn't stop when the ad starts to run. I know I helped Marriott implement testing in their newspaper advertising...it was a revelation to them that they could test individual elements of an ad in real time. I'm encouraging Big Agency folks to buy my book, attend DR seminars and get smarter about marketing. For a list of seminars to consider, please go to www.ThinkTwoProductsAhead.com/recommends/. Big Agency folks can learn a lot from Direct Response practitioners and other entrepreneurs.

But, the reverse is also true: entrepreneurs can learn a lot from what Big Agencies are doing. I hear some of the up-and-coming DR marketers using the word brand as a dirty word. As a branding practitioner I resemble their remarks and I don't care for the prideful ignorance disparaging my profession. Stop, please. There are things about Big Agency advertising that many Direct Response practitioners can learn. I read many these ideas from the veteran world-class copywriters. John Carlton's *The Marketing Rebel Rant* I find chock full of respect for the general principals of branding without using that word. The fact that John gives his rants away for free is a testament to his good will—panache, real style in prose and action. Thank you John.

Now, many folks training new marketers are explaining a model that looks something like this...



The headline must be intriguing to grab their attention. You tease out their considerations and as you overcome their objections you get the prospect really interested and if all goes well they buy.

This is a great lesson...the skills and nuances discussed appear vast and substantial. Traditional advertisers would vastly improve their chops by taking a couple of your course and actually doing the work.

Mastering the sale is imperative. Going on to the fancy stuff before you mastered the fundamentals is like attempting a semi-bluff in poker before you really understand how to bet for value. I know the savvy practitioners of Direct Response see the profit in nurturing the lifetime value of customer. John Carlton explains...

"Far too many marketers are ungentlemanly cads. They high-five each other after the order is taken, and promptly move on to the next conquest. Big Mistake.

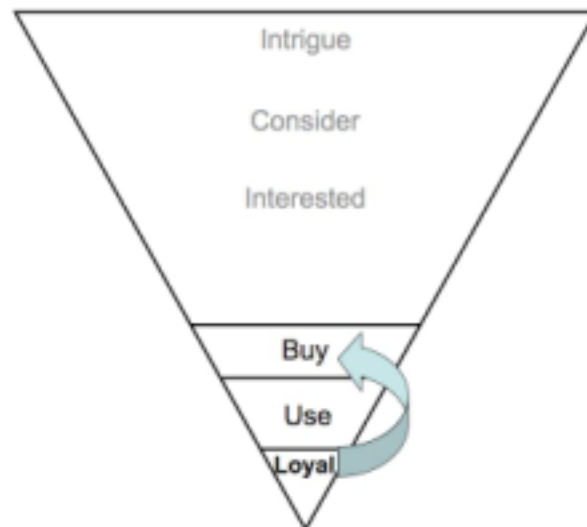
That first order from your new customer is the initial round only. Your goal is to make them a customer for life – so you continue the bonding, reinforce their buying decision, and make them feel welcome, safe and warm in your arms.

And sure, you're doing all that with your other customers, too.

But as far as each individual knows, they are the only apple in your eye."

--John Carlton

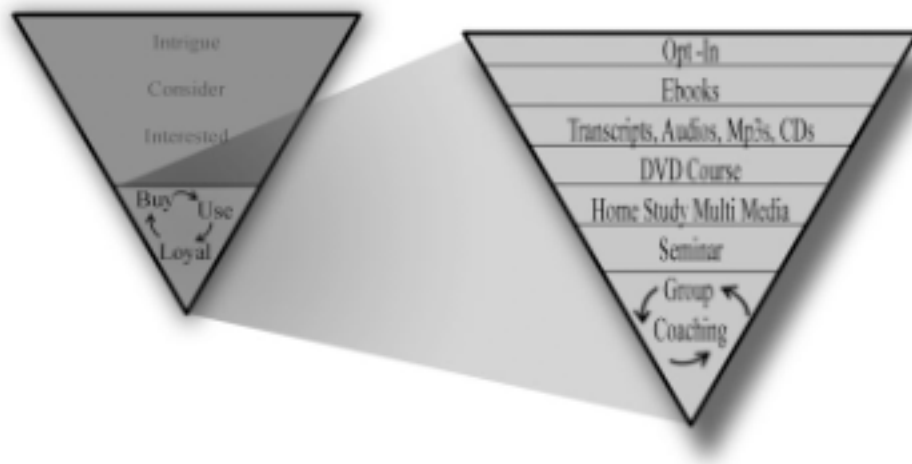
The Marketing Rebel Rant, Issue No. 12, May 2003



What I read John illuminating is that the sale is not the endgame. Your sale is really the beginning of a sustainable business relationship, an extended seduction that reinforces your appreciation of their patronage.

Buy, use, appreciate results, buy again. Buy, use, appreciate. Guide them to buy, help them use your product for maximum effect, help them appreciate the results/experience they have, suggest their next purchase. This is your path to loyalty.

Here's what an information marketer's purchase funnel looks like...



"My big strides in income came when I started to understand that you can not make huge money with \$47 ebooks. A small percentage will do it, but there is still money left on the table unless you create a back end."

--Mike Filsaime

ButterflyMarketing.com

Branding is about setting up your back end. You don't want to just make a sale, you want to make You're learning magic. Prepare yourself for accelerated growth. Buckle up and breathe.

several sales in a row to the same customer. You want to think two products ahead. You want your customer to crave your next product. This is an endless seduction. Need inspiration? Watch the movie 50 First Dates. You are constantly seducing your customer and demonstrating why they love you and need more of you RIGHT NOW.

In the next chapter we look at how Deutsch Advertising really cracked the code of integrating hard selling tactics in ads that reinforced an overall appeal for a mass product. SELLING HARD and BRANDING are not mutually exclusive.

But first I'm going to ask you to take stock of your real estate and your equities...

Chapter 2 Exercises:

- 1) Write down every touch a customer has with your product-from packaging, to website, to your phone message:
- 2) In what ways might your packaging and ancillary real estate reinforce the value of using your products?
- 3) Write down every proper noun you use e.g., product names.



Chapter 3 The Common Thread & Think Two Products Ahead

A satisfied customer is the beginning of brand equity. Satisfying her a second time is more profitable. Branding is the process of repeatedly satisfying your customer, uncovering the heart of her satisfaction and consistently delivering both products and messages that frames and fulfills her expectation of satisfaction.

What's the common thread of her satisfied experience? Once you identify this common thread, your brand essence, you can prominently weave this thread into your communications and create products that specifically satisfy this common thread.

Let's say you sell Elvis paraphernalia and rare documents of about Elvis and Graceland... Elvis is not your common thread, "Love for Elvis" is likely your common thread. Many of your customers would surely be put-off if you sold anything that denigrated Elvis.

Wells Fargo Case Study

A hundred years ago, mentioning Wells Fargo would conjure an image of a stagecoach delivering packages. Remember the play, The Music Man, where the whole town sings in anticipation of the cool stuff that might be delivered to them via the Wells Fargo wagon? Wells Fargo was the UPS of the second half of the 19th century. Wells Fargo was a company to be trusted with valuables. While Wells Fargo has always offered certain banking services, it was best known for its transportation services. In 1918, the federal government assumed operations of the nation's railroads and express services as a wartime measure. Wells Fargo, American Express, Southern Express, and all other express companies' offices, equipment and employees were merged into one vast American Railway Express. However, Wells Fargo continued its banking business independently. Wells Fargo was successful because of the strength of its brand—customers trusted Wells Fargo with their valuables so they trusted Wells Fargo with their money.

*That was their common thread? **Wells Fargo provided safety for valuables.***

Today, when you need a company you can trust with your money, you may consider Wells Fargo. Trust is the essence of their brand, more than their physical banks, checks, or even their name. The name became a symbol of this trust, but without this trust, the company would have evaporated when the government took over their express business. It was the customers' willingness to do business with Wells Fargo that allowed them to continue when they suddenly had to switch product offerings. It was leveraging their common thread that allowed them to find new business opportunities.

Some people would argue that what I described above is just plain marketing. Maybe. But discussions around brand generally have to do with equity and I know **brand equity is real**—Premium brands charge premium prices and sell great volumes of products. Just go into your grocery store and look around; you'll notice that generic or store-labeled-products are less expensive than nationally advertised products, even on commodities like salt or sugar. The packaging is sometimes better, making the container easier to pour or seal, but there's something else going on there.

Brands can create "Magic". What I mean by magic is...something extraordinarily special. It just makes us feel good. Brands that sell fashion and cosmetics are exquisite in their ability to make us feel good. Managing your brand will help prevent your products from going out of fashion. However, I won't be discussing brands primarily sold in fashion magazines. Fashion is as much about breaking rules as it is about adhering to what's popular. I'm not an expert on fashion...I leave that to my girlfriend and I will wear what she tells me to. Just like how I let an art director design my book covers. I don't know how to make that kind of magic...but I know how to guide them.

You don't have a choice whether you want a brand, only whether you're going to manage it. Where do brands come from? The stork brings them...I'm joking. Brands manifest wherever business is done.

Do you want to do business with that person again? Even swap meets have branding issues. In San Bernardino, California I saw a new swap meet that advertised "Friendlier Vendors". Friendlier vendors than where? Friendlier vendors than the old swap meet a few miles away. This swap meet learned that shoppers wanted a friendly buying experience.

In today's consumer economy, **shopping is fun**. What is the #1 activity to do while on vacation? It's not golf...It's shopping! (Grocery shopping is an exception to *shopping is fun*, with the possible exception of Publix, *where shopping is a pleasure*.)

You're learning magic. Prepare yourself for accelerated growth. Buckle up and breathe.

Even bargain hunting at a swap meet is affected by branding, because branding is not the design of the logo but the experience. The experience of buying affects my likelihood to buy again or even consider buying again.

Brands manifest wherever business is done. Brands are stewarded through the help of a brand vision. Brand visions are handmade by marketers and executives, but brands are disseminated by every touch consumers have with any context of your brand. A brand vision is not nearly as complicated nor as ethereal as often described. I'm going to make creating a brand vision real simple for you.

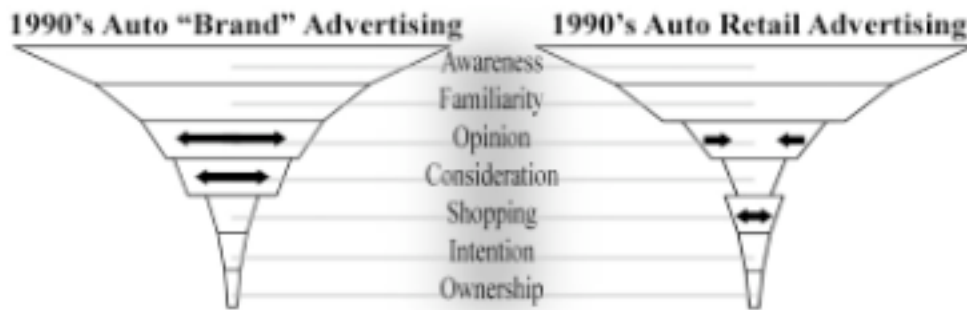
Names, logos, websites and packaging are invitations to enjoy your product or service, to do business with you. Every contact a consumer has with your company should be inviting, an extension of your hospitality and an invitation buy now.

Until the mid 1990s, there were two primary types of TV commercials for automobiles:

1. National "brand" spots
2. Dealer "retail" spots

Automobile dealerships pay money for advertising into two kitties, a national fund and a regional fund. It used to be that the national fund was for "brand" advertising created by the manufacturer and run through national media. The regional fund was for "retail" advertising created by a local dealer association and run through that region's media.

"Brand" advertising was good at raising perceived esteem for an automobile or line of automobiles, but did little good for generating immediate sales. While "Retail" advertising would stimulate immediate sales, but actually undermined the overall opinion of consumers not currently shopping for vehicles. The mindset of the shopper is very different the mindset of the user. A shopper hears a sale as "good value" while a user often hears the same message as "cheap."



In the diagram on the left you can see “Opinion” and “Consideration” broaden while the old *Brand* ads ran, but they did very little to drive immediate traffic on showroom floors. However, the diagram on the right shows that dealer *Retail* ads, “Come on in, today we’re offering...” ads hurt people’s “Opinion” of the car and their future “Consideration” for the car went down as well. So, car companies used to alternate between local/regional *retail* ads and national *brand* ads.

It took a long time for advertising folks to figure out how to build a brand and drive retail at the same time. Don’t be too harsh on advertisers...we got to the moon and back before we figured out how to put wheels on a suitcase. Remember suitcases before Travel Pro? Technology evolves and only in hindsight do we say it was obvious.

Automobile ads today often do both well, they increase an overall opinion of a car while generating an immediate interest in those shopping. What used to be called “brand” spots are part of what contributed to some of the misnomers of branding today. Many creatives used to pride themselves on not selling in national brand spots. Not much of this sentiment has survived in advertising. Why? Because branding is about making money! This is business.

The challenge cracked was to stimulate immediate sales while building the positive image of the product. When I worked at Deutsch Advertising in 1996 I saw them crack this advertising puzzle with Eric Hirschberg’s work on Mitsubishi automobiles. The brand essence of Mitsubishi was vitality, there was a common thread of verve through all their communications. Deutsch created a promotion of “Wake up and drive.” All national spots drove a retailing message as they communicated an essence of vitality. In one message they increased future consideration for Mitsubishi and drove immediate traffic to the salesroom floor. You’re learning magic. Prepare yourself for accelerated growth. Buckle up and breathe.

Your business is healthy when people are buying now AND intending to buy, or at least open to buying in the future.

Branding is nurturing *your* Golden Goose that lays *your* Golden Eggs. How do you nurture your Golden Goose? Be good to your gander...

Chapter 3 Exercises

- 1) Write an exhaustive list of why people give you money, their reason for buying.
- 2) Write down the emotional benefit behind each of these reasons for buying.
- 3) Write down a different emotional benefit for purchasing your product

Example: Let's say you sell insurance, automobile insurance.

<u>Why they buy</u>	<u>Emotional benefit</u>	<u>Another Emotional Benefit</u>
Legally required	Peace of mind	Easy...I make it easy to buy
Protect car	Confidence	Well rested...I sleep without worry
Protect house	Being responsible	Love of family

Keep raising the stakes and see what emerges. If you don't have enough auto-insurance, and you get in a bad enough wreck, a plaintiff can go after your house. Getting adequate auto coverage is an expression of your love for your family. If you think this is B.S., speak to somebody who lost their house because they were inadequately covered.

Keep this real...but keep raising the stakes. What are you really providing?

Another example: Let's say you sell cell phones.

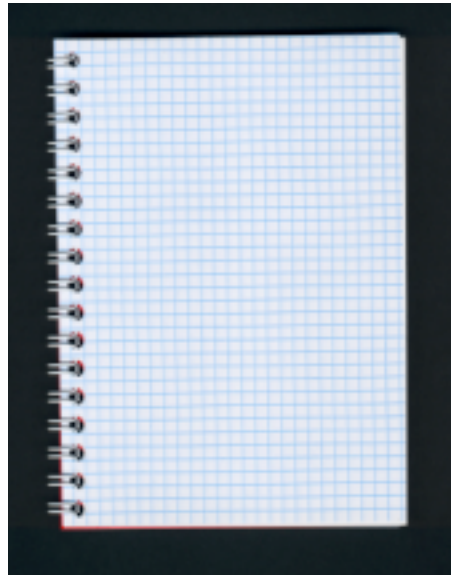
<u>Why they buy</u>	<u>Emotional benefit</u>	<u>Another Emotional Benefit</u>
Need it for work	Productive	Empowerment
In case of emergency	Confidence	Calm
Reachable for friends	In-the-know	Enfranchised—part of community
Stay connected with spouse/kids	Connected	Love of family

In the mid '90s, cell phone ads were all about productivity and empowerment. Then, ads started to discuss the up side to having a cell phone for an emergency. Now, it's more about humanity and friends or the network.

Love is a big seller...family packs are sold around holidays.

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Your list of reasons to buy should be as long as you can make it. Don't worry about repeating emotional benefits or leaving blanks. This will be helpful when you extract your brand essence. Can you discover a common thread that encompasses your strongest emotional benefits? What would you love to help your customer accomplish?



One more exercise...

4) Look for a common thread and note similarities between the emotional benefits

Chapter 4: Branding? Be Good To Your Gander...

Sales is about identifying a thirsty prospect and selling them a glass of water. Branding is about selling your 2nd glass and the 3rd glass and the 4th until when they're thirsty they want to buy your water. Ultimately, you want everybody to feel deprived if they can't have your water.

If a brand is a relationship between consumers and a named product or service, then branding is nurturing this relationship. *Branding is the process of connecting with consumers and creating continuity between your products, so customers want to buy your product now and will want to buy your product in the future.*

Isn't marketing the same thing as branding? Yes, when it's good. Marketing tends to focus on what you say where; branding tends to focus on how you say what. Marketing and branding are interdependent.

Branding is about making money. Branding is about identifying what is attracting customers to buy your product, your common thread, and weaving this thread into your product and communications as fully and authentically as possible.

If branding is nurturing *your* Golden Goose...**how do you nurture your Golden Goose?** The most fabulous brand in the world is worthless without a customer. You know that a goose can't lay a fertile egg without a gander, a male goose. You've heard the expression, *what's good for the goose is good for the gander?* Well, it works the other way, too. So, **be good to your gander.** Be good to your customer. Love and respect your profitable customer. Without a customer your goose isn't laying those golden eggs.

Thinking two products ahead will help you attract the appropriate gander. The most expensive part of marketing is getting a new customer...but what kind of customer? You want a profitable customer. Sales can be

a great way to get rid of aging merchandise to end-using customers, but it is usually a lousy way of fertilizing your Golden Goose.

Allow me to address this in a round about way...In advertising I've worked as an account planner or a brand strategist. What's the difference? I don't know. What I do know is that highly successful ad agencies often refer to an account planner as a consumer advocate while I have never heard that phrase in shops that called me a brand strategist. Many businesses would be more profitable if they hired consumer advocates, people to speak up when the company is about to upset or disappoint their customers.



While working with Baskin Robbins, we were promoting a two-scoop sundae for \$1.99. The above image is not the actual product we were promoting but an image I purchased from istock.com. However, each of the ice-cream scoops above appear to be 2.5 ounce scoops of delicious ice cream. The problem with our promotion was that franchisees weren't making much money on these sundaes with the customary 5 oz. of scrumptious ice cream. So, corporate decided to appease these owners by authorizing the use of one 2.5 oz. scoop and one 1.5 oz. scoop. I pointed out that our customers wouldn't really be experiencing our Baskin Robbins Two-Scoop Sundae. They said they would train in-store employees to explain to customers that this was a trial size. That seemed impractical and, sure enough, it never happened. For a time it seemed like everybody was happy...customers flocked in, franchisee owners and corporate were all happy. But when the sale ended the customers evaporated. The regular price of \$2.99 wasn't attractive for what they had experienced. It might have been had the product been a full serving, but that hypothesis would have required testing to validate. Perhaps creating a new name for this smaller size product would have been a more

In a later meeting it was suggested that maybe if the advertising showed the product from the proper angle we could only give the customer two 1.5 oz. scoops. I replied, “Maybe if the advertising is really good enough, and we trained the store employees well enough, we could get folks to come in and give us their money and wouldn’t need to give them any ice cream at all.” That didn’t go over so well. Lines like that are part of why I’m a better freelancer than employee. But I digress. There was no strategy! Furthermore, there was no love. They were looking at their customer like this:



Let’s say our new customer just loves that \$1.99 two-scoop sundae, which they did. Now what? There was no plan for transferring this behavior nor for extending the product they grew to love. There was no thinking two products ahead, there was only thinking about driving immediate sales.

Branding is about keeping your new customers while you attract more customers. That’s basic, but it seems to be extraordinarily rare. And, maybe, this is just basic marketing...so, I want to talk about magic.

Sometimes branding is magic.



Are you old enough to remember this: In the 1980's, Wendy's had bigger hamburgers than most other fast food joints, what in the industry is called a quick service restaurants. Wendy's unique selling point was bigger burgers. Branding asked, "How do we say we have bigger burgers?" Their marketers agreed to their ad agency's solution of an old woman asking of the competitions' burgers, "Where's the beef?!?!". Great ad. Sales went up.

Sales didn't stay up. Sure, Wendy's is doing fine...but they had some magic and they let the magic slip away.

What am I talking about? "Where's the beef?!?!". They were promising a bigger burger. They were promising BIG. Now, twenty years later, you can see remnants of this notion on their menu in their Biggie®. You're learning magic. Prepare yourself for accelerated growth. Buckle up and breathe.

drinks and fries, and people still remember this phrase, but Wendy's isn't known for BIG today, not really. The \$6 Hamburger and other choices have become the Hummer of fast food burgers.

Branding is finding out what you stand for and then communicating and delivering what you stand for.

Here's why the magic works...

Modern consumers suffer from constant *overchoice...they have too many things to choose between*. In a supermarket, I'm confronted with 14 different brands of BBQ sauce in 9 different flavors. I never look at all my choices. Last week I was asked to bring some to a friend's house so I got a gourmet one. If it were for my own chicken, I'd start by looking at what's on sale. But whatever the case is, I start narrowing my choices.

Studies have shown that people who claim "I always buy what's on sale or the lowest price item" are liars. Maybe lying is too harsh of a word there...Nobody died because of their reporting error. When their carts were analyzed, **80% of these people had more than half of their cart filled with products that were neither on sale nor the lowest price.**

How does this happen? Overchoice. **We don't like to think, *too much*.**



We buy what we bought last time. We like some products more than others. Sure, many of us play You're learning magic. Prepare yourself for accelerated growth. Buckle up and breathe.

Sudoku, solve crossword puzzles or play video games like Myst, but that's fun thinking...time we set aside for problem solving. In a supermarket customers aren't scrutinizing their choices for an optimal score, but getting through the chore of grocery shopping.

We don't like to think. Why is this important? In most cases, consumers limit their consideration to the products that are familiar in some way. ***We like what we already know.*** Further studies have shown that these consumers sometimes literally don't see products that they aren't familiar with. **When presented with overchoice we *see only* what we already know.**

Part of leveraging branding is to present yourself consistently, showing customers that you're already familiar. Why are bad-acting celebrities valuable? They are already familiar. In an attention economy, recognition is valuable.

Leverage your recognition; leverage your desirability.

Branding is consistently communicating and delivering what you stand for in a profitable way.

Branding is like poker—the level of the stakes affect the nature of the game. Most of the books on branding discuss high-stakes branding with multi-million dollar advertising campaigns. I've played this game. I'm not very good at the politics. But what I found were great tools for opening new doors to perceiving brands differently and I'm revealing them in this book. I'm not breaking any non-disclosure documents because I discovered an underlying similarity in approaches.

It doesn't matter what stakes poker you are playing, in any casino in the world a full-house always beats a flush, but not a Royal Flush. Just like poker, branding has a lot of luck involved. However, in both poker and branding the high-stakes pros have developed tools to minimize risk and exploit advantages.

What I hope to do in the next chapter is make the multi-million dollar tools accessible to lower-stakes branding practitioners. Candidly, I imagine lower-stakes branding practitioners will make better use of this

You're learning magic. Prepare yourself for accelerated growth. Buckle up and breathe.

material: you're playing with your own money and you take profits far more seriously than a politician (I see most corporate executives more like politicians than truly business folks).

These tools may appear too simple to be useful. I beg to differ. A claw hammer may not look glamorous, but if you had sold them to craftsmen 100 years ago you could have made a fortune. When a craftsman uses a better tool they see it makes their work easier, faster and the result is a stronger product. Imagine the gloat you will feel the first time you hear a competitor say, "I wish I had thought of that."

"Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic."

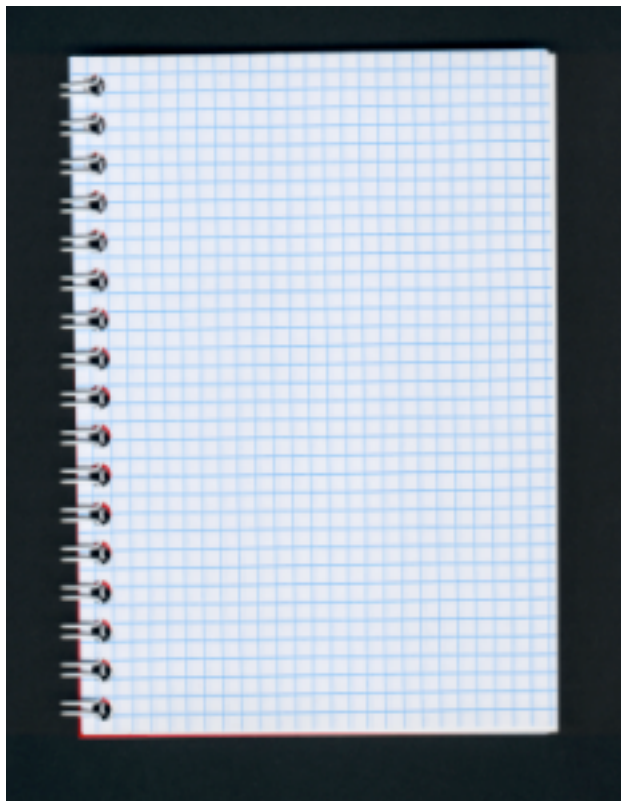
--Arthur C. Clarke

"Profiles of The Future", Clarke's third law

Chapter 4 Exercises

1) Take your emotional benefits from the previous chapter, and write them on index cards. Lay them out in front of you. What kinds of groupings do you see? Name these groupings by picking a word that reflects the content of each grouping.

2) Look at these names. Is there a label that would encapsulate these ideas? Write down whatever comes to mind and continue on. Don't get "stuck" on any of these exercises.



Chapter 5: Branding Processes Are Strikingly Similar

I've worked at seven ad agencies—big ones like BBDO, Deutsch and JWT, and boutiques such as WONGDOODY and TG Madison—each with its own proprietary branding process. They're ALL doing the same thing. I'm not alone in this perception. Here's a quote from a man who's a bigwig in helping companies find new ad agencies:

"It should come as no surprise that the mechanics of most so-called proprietary branding processes are startlingly similar."

December, 2001 Newsletter

Mike Agate

Chairman & Founder

Select Resources International

Marketing companies may use different words in their branding scheme, with different labels and pictures, but virtually all of them use the same three steps:

1) Synthesize

2) Extract

3) Amplify



Brand Essence

That word in the center there, *Brand Essence*, that is a “handle” for the **relevance** that compels people to want to give you their money. This is your common thread. It is difficult to reduce all your **relevance** into a word, or two to three words, but it is useful for communications to feel integrated.

My brand essence is “Debunking Consensus Reality”. That’s really clunky and uses some big words...that’s fine. A **“brand essence” need only make sense to the marketing team**. In 2001 when I worked

with Clif Bar, their brand essence was Mojo—that's an extreme case of a loose definition, but it worked for the Clif Bar team. Something similar works for the luxury women's under garment company Spanx. Until you have a multi-million dollar company, I suggest you choose a more tangible brand essence. Your goal is to have something that enables you to ask yourself:

Does _____ reinforce a sense of Brand Essence ?

That's it. That's the \$197 idea. I know...this doesn't seem like it's worth that much, yet. The rest of this book is an instruction manual on using this \$197 idea. If you think \$197 is a lot of money, you are playing low-stakes business. At BBDO I had an opportunity to look at the final PowerPoint for a global positioning project for Pepsi. I think they paid over \$10,000,000 for an answer...and it was a one-word answer, not yes or no, but a one-word encapsulation of their positioning, "more". You don't remember hearing the word "more" repeated ad nauseum in their commercials? That's because *more* was the essence they were communicating... *not the word*. Repeat: Your brand essence is not the word(s) necessarily used in your communications.

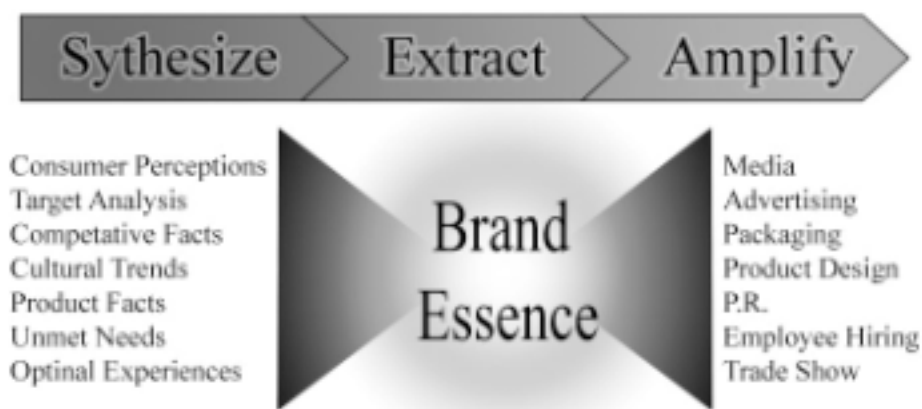
Let's see how this works: Does THINK TWO PRODUCTS AHEAD reinforce a sense of Debunking Consensus Reality? I hope so. My brand essence, *Debunking Consensus Reality*, basically means *Dispelling Popular Myths*. Branding is often made to appear complicated. Many marketers coming across discussions on branding find the topic irrelevant and costly. I'm making a case that branding is understandable, relevant and most importantly...PROFITABLE.

Does (INSERT A PEPSI COMMUNICATION) reinforce a sense of More? If it's not then they look for another communication. This idea helped Pepsi reflect the desires of their identified target audience in an easy to understand, relevant, and most importantly...PROFITABLE way.

But you can't really PROFITABLY use this tool until you extract your brand essence. So, back to explaining the branding process...

Sometimes an illustration of a branding process is turned horizontally. Often, the amplification phase is a rainbow, as if the brand essence is a prism through which communications are projected. Or, your brand essence is the common thread that must be woven through all your communications. When you look at a communication, ask yourself if it feels like it was cut from the same cloth as the rest of your communications.

Here's another visual of the same process...

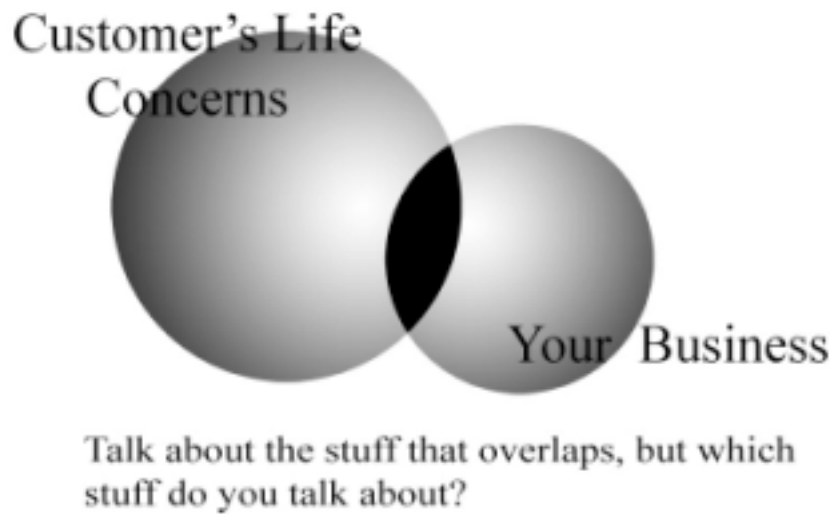


Ideally, a brand essence remains virtually unchanged from one decade to the next. You can see the thread of your brand over the ages and woven into every communication. The advertising and packaging of your brand may change, but a true brand essence remains constant. I haven't worked on Betty Crocker, but I imagine their brand essence is "love on the table." Now, the image of Betty Crocker herself needs to shift with changing fashion, but the essence that baking is a sign of love remains constant.

Synthesizing is analyzing everything you know about your target, your product and your competition. You can spend thousands of hours and millions of dollars doing this phase, but this phase is not what a customer is truly buying. Pepsi paid over \$10,000,000 because they needed the research in order to land on "more" with confidence.

What is this magical brand essence? Yes, I truly do believe it is magical. [No, I don't want hate mail from readers telling me that mentioning the word "magic" is likely to condemn me to eternal damnation. I appreciate your desire to help, now go check out GetForgiven.com.]

A quick review of marketing...



Arguably, this diagram is NOT drawn to scale. In reality your product probably barely overlaps with their life concerns. Even if your product feeds a passion like golf or making money, your product is only relevant to a sliver of a customers overall life.

Now we're getting into the thick of synthesis and positioning considerations. This is where your work begins. Do you have your notebook handy? You should be writing down whatever appears valuable to you. This is a workbook. Write on these pages. What I'm sharing with you next is the prep work I go through before I work with a client on their branding. It is better to write down an idea you don't use than to remember you had an idea and you can't recollect what the notion was. The first word of the title of this book is *Think*. I'm helping you think about profitable thinking.

We're delving into how to slice and dice ideas. These are likely to be new skills to you. If at first you don't find them easy, keep working...like most things in life, they get easier with practice. If positioning were You're learning magic. Prepare yourself for accelerated growth. Buckle up and breathe.

so easy, people like me couldn't charge a couple grand a day for our services...and that's the wholesale price.

Some folks charge substantially more. Similar to other disciplines, practice helps.

The best I've ever seen is Andrew Robertson, CEO of BBDO Worldwide. While I know many pitfalls to working with Big Agencies, they also have the budgets to hire some of the best talent. I'd like to work with Kevin Roberts, CEO of Saatchi & Saatchi. His book *Lovemarks* makes complete sense to me. However, the tactics illustrated may be difficult for some marketers to scale down for smaller brands. Roberts explains the value of finding a brand's love story and transforming their logo into a *Lovemark*. Brilliant.

Ideally, a brand essence remains virtually unchanged from one decade to the next. The advertising and packaging of your brand may change to stay contemporary, but a true brand essence remains constant. Part of stewarding the brand is championing the brand essence. If your corporate culture is confused or conflicted on your brand essence, it is time to either regroup and address current concerns, or go through a branding process. Be as wary of changing your brand essence as our government is of altering the Constitution: we have added amendments, but each amendment has been exhaustively explored and debated before ratification.

Every dollar you spend on developing your brand is a dollar that is not going towards communicating with your target. Why invest in uncovering your brand essence? Investing in defining your brand can make your media dollars go further, because each message becomes more efficient and all of your messages work stronger in concert. You get a concerted effort. This effect works in mass marketing and 1:1 marketing. Whether you're on TV or selling one at a time with direct response letters, your product should reflect your pitch so the customer feels satisfied and will be excited to do business with you again.

How much can your company invest? Large companies often retain a branding firm to help them articulate their positioning and brand promise. The total cost of this service can easily exceed \$250,000, often costing millions of dollars. The advertising agencies of these companies may be able to yield comparable results utilizing similar processes for a fraction of this cost. Sometimes they can't. Its similar to getting a paint job for your car; you can spend however much you want. At the end of the day, a \$249 paint job and a \$28,000 paint

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job both yield a red car that basically looks the same from ten feet away. The more you spend, the less the discernable difference. The differences between a \$2,000 paint job and a \$6,000 paint job may take a trained eye to discern. The differences between a \$6,000 paint job and a \$28,000 paint job may entail disassembling the car to appreciate these differences. However, some companies won't have confidence in the branding process without a certain level of expenditure. Spending too little will undermine the value to some buyers. Here's how I learned that lesson the hard way...

Personal Anecdote

When I was 19, I was paying my way through UCLA as a magician. I was performing at RJ's for Ribs in Beverly Hills on Saturday nights. A woman from San Francisco asked me what I would charge, above expenses, to perform at a party in Northern California. I said a thousand dollars, more than twice what I had ever charged for a show up to that point. Two weeks later she got back to me and said that her husband and she had gotten into a fight over it. She really wanted me, but her husband held to "What kind of a magician are we going to get for only a thousand dollars?"

Obviously, a local florist shouldn't spend \$250,000 on articulating its positioning and brand essence. But the processes covered in these chapters are still relevant. A single store may conduct consumer research by talking directly to its clients, as opposed to conducting focus groups in several markets.

It is irresponsible for a nationally advertised brand not to invest a certain amount annually in consumer research to understand shifts in consumer perceptions and to implement these learnings as they maintain the relevance of their brand's voice. Hopefully, this book will help you gauge an appropriate level of spending. If you call a branding company or call a branding consultant and ask them if you need to do a comprehensive brand assessment, they will respond with a resounding "Yes!" Branding consultants are sales people. They make money by selling their services. You may not need all their services. You may be able to take certain tasks off their plate.

Please don't mistake this commentary. I am not advocating spending the least amount of money possible. Doing bad consumer research is far worse than not doing research. Getting bad branding advice is far worse than figuring it out yourself. It is much better to find that something costs more than you thought it. You're learning magic. Prepare yourself for accelerated growth. Buckle up and breathe.

would, than to discover that you spent less than you should have. If you speak with five different branding firms, chances are you will hear five different proprietary methods for branding that each state is “the best of the best of the best.” Some of these methods will utilize a metaphor, where the phases of the project get labeled like some familiar process. Others may have a theme. As opposed to going through the phases of a familiar process, these phases have names that relate to the theme. Other branding schemes may label their phases by the function of each phase. Which one's best? The one that makes the most sense to you and where the people you will be working with seem like people you can work with. Make sure you meet the people with whom you will actually be working with on a day-to-day basis.

Ask about your bid. Ask what you would sacrifice, if you needed a lower bid, ask in what ways might we be able to lower this cost? Perhaps existing research can replace a portion of the proposed initial research. It may be that you can pay this branding partner to synthesize some of your recent research instead of commissioning new studies. You may be able to synthesize some of the research for the vendor. Saving them time should save you money. It may be that they need to conduct the research they propose in order to do the job the way they feel it needs to be done.

Warning about reducing costs: It is usually better to spend more than you originally budgeted than to go forward and find that you spent less than you really needed. I've worked on too many research studies where we lowered the sample size in order to reduce costs and garnered inconclusive findings. In those cases, a lot of money was spent and not much could be done with confidence.

In the next chapter we start our mental calisthenics. The processes I explain are not the final product. Customers don't buy your marketing positioning statement. However, not doing these kinds of exercises lessens your likelihood of consistently resonating with your customer and nurturing your Golden Goose.

You need a gut-check. If all the pieces of a puzzle fit together but there isn't any soul to your communications...it probably won't really resonate with your prospects or your current customers either. There are other marketers seeking to woo your customers away. Be beautiful.

“When I’m working on a problem, I never think about beauty. I think only how to solve the problem. But when I have finished, if the solution is not beautiful, I know it is wrong.”
--R. Buckminster Fuller

Chapter 5 Exercises

1) Look at your product and packaging: has as much thought gone into this as went into your sales and marketing material? Does your packaging reinforce what you touted in the marketing of your product? If your product and packaging were marketing another product...would it be different?



Chapter 6: What's a Brand Essence?

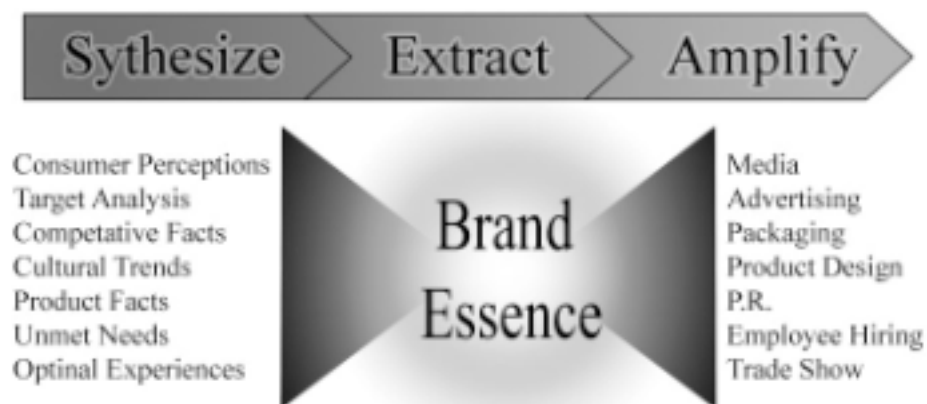
Your brand essence is a mental territory where you have an advantage. You selected this common thread because it empowered your sales. Framing is about what you bring to the forefront of your customer's mind. If you revisit your list of possible framings, please add to your list.

We've been synthesizing data—damn that looks like a complicated concept: synthesizing data, but that's what we've been doing.

Hopefully...

- A few cool things have emerged
- You have some new perspectives
- You are developing a new relationship with cohesive ideas

We're getting ready to extract a brand essence...



6-1

Ideally, a brand essence remains virtually unchanged from one decade to the next. The advertising and packaging of your brand may change, but a true brand essence remains constant. I know I said that earlier, but most brand managers get caught up with the functionality of their products without seeing the bigger picture of their brand essence.

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Sergio Zyman uses the term core essence instead of brand essence. Fine. Same difference. Zyman

suggesting understanding how your core essence is relevant now and how it is becoming relevant is the heart of sustainable business...

“You may think you’re innovating, but you’re probably just wasting money. Try renovating instead...A recent disaster is the Walkman. While Sony was busy making colorful new versions of personal, portable CD players, Apple was out there redefining portable entertainment. Sony should have introduced iPods, not Apple. So what was the domain of Sony is now Apple’s forever.”

Sergio Zyman

“The Innovation Illusion”

CMO Magazine, 2/26/06

You’re essence is what you’re building and reinforcing.

The biggest choice in extracting a brand essence is choosing whether your brand essence should be tangible or intangible. Tangible essences tend to be about physical attributes such as low prices (Wal*Mart / SouthWest) or large (Amazon / Star Network ATMs); while intangible brand essences are experiential, like luxury (Rolex / Mount Blanc) or relaxation (Corona / Levis).

Before you go mucking with your image, start by asking what has been the key to your success so far? Is this key sustainable? Is there a damn good reason that this key to your success shouldn’t be your brand essence? Just checking. If you are new to this idea of a brand essence, think about what’s been your key to success. Now how does that feel to the customer...what’s the consumer’s benefit?

Be wary of broadening your definition of your brand essence. In the ‘70s, Miller Beer owned relaxation, “It’s Miller Time.” Miller broadened their essence to include the beer that buddies share. This left relaxation undefended. Today, Corona stands for relaxation. Miller stands for what exactly?

The objective of extraction is to create a platform that leverages the favorable conditions identified during synthesis. This is a battle for a mind and you want to engage on the most advantageous terrain.

"Military strategists know that most battles are won before the first shot is fired—by the side that determines where, when and how an engagement is fought...Political professionals call the act of defining the terrain of engagement ‘framing the debate.’”
-James Carville & Paul Begala
Buck Up, Suck Up

In branding, your essence is your terrain. Your essence should be a ground where, if you were challenged, you would likely win.

I argue that a once a brand essence is identified, the company should structure itself around delivering that brand essence. A brand essence needs to be more than communication talk points. **A brand essence needs to be a vision to continuously grow into.**

“A Brahmin is not a Brahmin because he is born a Brahmin, but because his body is an arrow and his soul is a bow and with all his might he is aiming his soul at being Brahmin.”
-Herman Hesse
Siddhartha

A brand essence is not a brand essence because you state it; a brand essence exists only to the extent your whole organization actively generates this essence.

Making money is why your company exists, but let's put that aside for this exercise. Why do customers give you money? Hannibal Lecter coached, “Read Marcus Aurelius. Of each particular thing ask: what is it in itself?”

For Corona drinking their beer isn't about the flavor or getting a buzz as much as it is a statement of “this is play time.”

Most people aren't buying the function of a product, but their associations with the brand or the feelings of the style...they're buying something beyond the function.

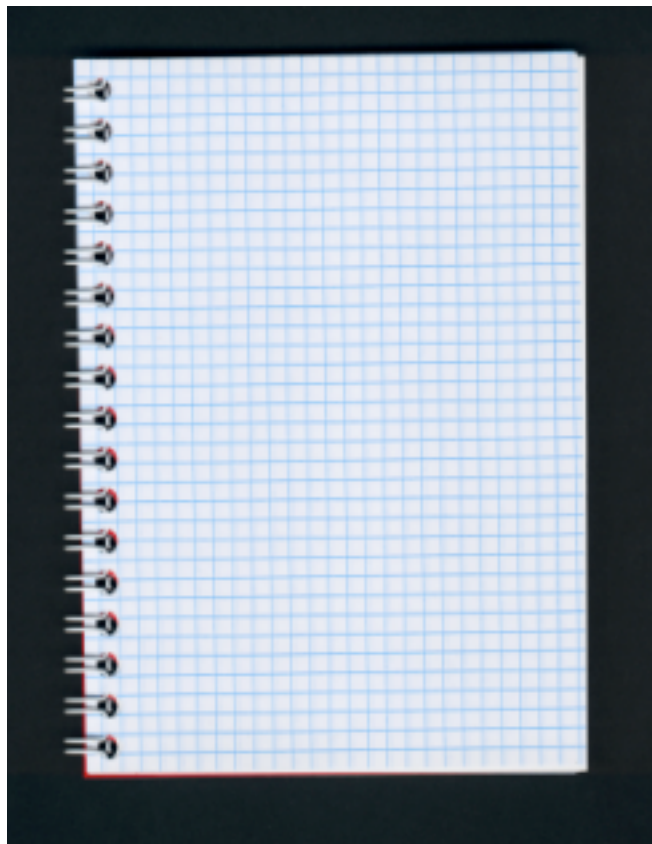
You see, there's a functional thing a product or service does and then there's a bigger space with an emotional benefit. **Emotions are the key to loyalty.**

Consistently promising and delivering on an emotion creates loyalty; you desire unreasonable customers, customer willing to pay more than average for a product and not to think about any other source for their satisfaction.

Consistency is the backbone of a longstanding trust. What follows are tools for consistency and continuity of messaging, Legendary Branding.

Chapter 6 Exercises

1) Make a list of inconsistencies between your materials. What can be tighter? Are you using the same vocabulary? Are there promises made in marketing not reinforced in packaging? Tell your user what benefits they are enjoying. Your packaging and your product is your marketing for your next sale. Make them happy. ☺



Chapter 7: Legendary Branding

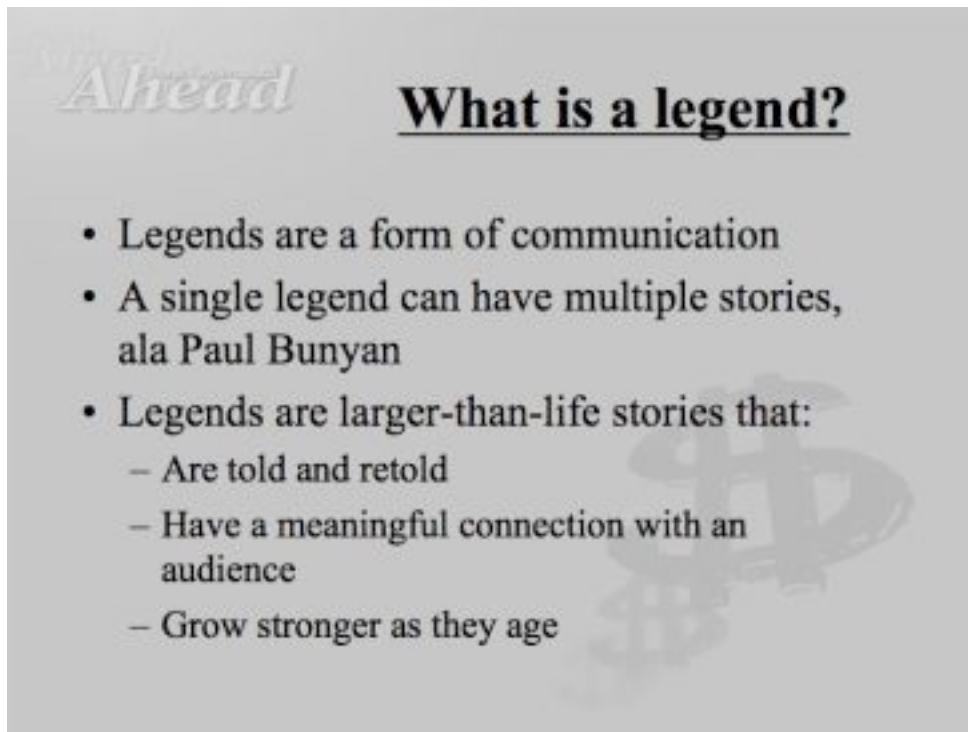
I've made up a few branding systems: Memetic Branding, Agricultural Branding, DNA Branding and Legendary Branding. They're all structurally similar, they just use different models. Of these, Legendary Branding is consistently the easiest to understand. So, I'm giving it to you here, but first let's review...And, I'm going to use PowerPoint slides because PowerPoint is the medium of business



Since your brand is not your logo, I'm not overly concerned with minor inconsistencies in color or size. Should minor errors exist in your communications? No. I'm just saying that there are more important things with which you can concern yourself than minor differences or tiny flaws on marketing materials.



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Brands live in their stories...some of the stories are seeded by commercials and other communications like packaging, websites and answering machine messages. However, there are many, many stories about our products and services that we don't script. Yesterday, when we ordered a Dominos Pizza...those kind of stories.

Why is it people feel more compelled to share negative experiences? I don't know, but for the sake of your brand, please try and keep your customers happy. For my sake, I hope you find these ideas actionable and profitable.



Hero Biography

- Within every legend there must be a hero
 - A character whose story is told
- Your customer is the hero of your story...your product or service is what facilitates their heroic activities
- In identifying your hero biography, we are locating and defining the core essence of your brand

7-4

Did you read that? **Your customer is your story's hero; your product or service is what facilitates their heroic activities.** These words on this page are meaningless unless it helps people make more money.

The greatest honor of writing a business book is having people I have never met take my words seriously and work through these ideas for themselves. The greatest thrill is when they share how it has helped them. Joost van der Leij has profited from these ideas. When he wrote me with suggestions for improvement I implemented as much as I could, knowing there were other readers with very similar perspectives. If I could make this material more useable to Joost, others would be more likely to replicate his success.

“Before I received an advance copy of Ben Mack’s *Think Two Products Ahead*, I was a ‘successful’ direct response practitioner...Nice five figure income. Ever since I implemented these ideas from early January 2006 on, I have been adjusting my forecast upward. Original I had planned for a 50%

increase in sales in 2006, but today, March 1st, even **my most conservative forecasts mean doubling revenues in 2006.**

- Google Click Through Rate jumped from 5.1% to 9.1%
- Subscriptions to my free newsletter increased from 100 to 150 per week to anything between 250 and 350 people each week
- Sales have gone up 206% month over month

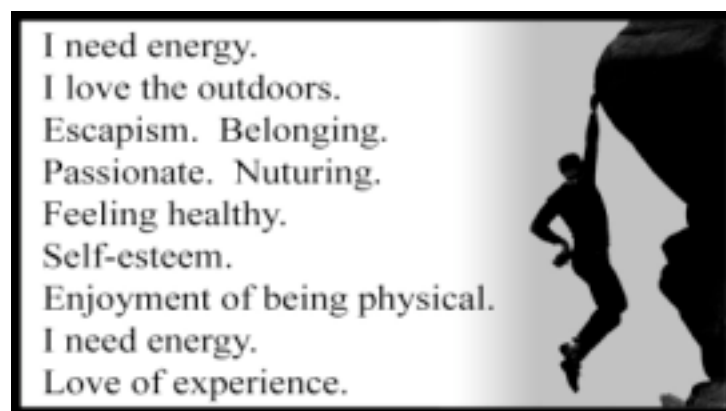
But going beyond the cold figures, I now have a much better understanding of my relationship with my clients, my communication with them and most important the reason why they choose to do business with me. I am happy to say that I now have found a process by which I am enable to do the work I love most ... for the rest of my life. **No more uncertainty about the future, for I am assured of more work than I can handle each and every day.**

Joost van der Leij, CEO, TIOUW.com BV

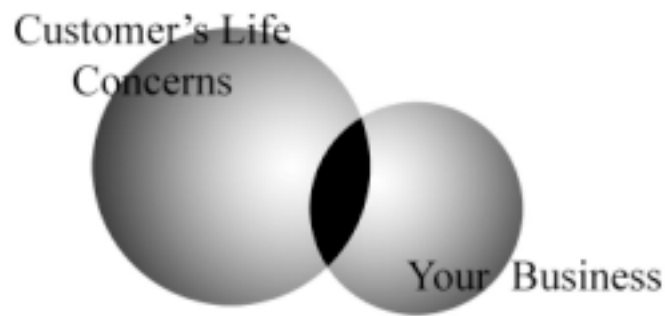
For more information see <http://www.tiouw.com/en/>

Who is your customer? Your hero. Your customer is the hero of your story. The person you are fighting to help be successful. Joost is my hero. The tools and techniques in this book facilitated his heroic business growth, Joost did the work and had the fortitude to follow-through and implement these ideas.

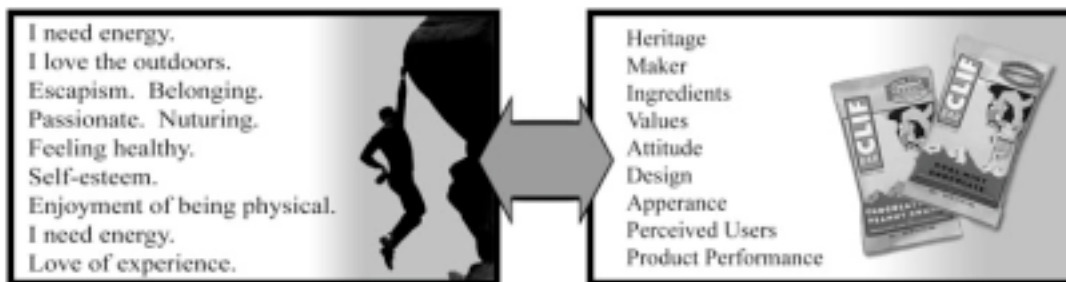
Let's look at Cliff Bar's hero...



Clif Bar is made by athletes for athletes. A Clif Bar user is somebody who has such a good time doing out-door physical activities that they need extra energy in the form of an energy bar. But this person also enjoys great taste. The funky taste of a Power Bar just doesn't work for them, especially that chemically after-taste.



Talk about the stuff that overlaps, but which stuff do you talk about?



You want your customer to see themselves in your communications.

Ahead **Brands are stories.**

- People like stories that reflect their values

A visual representation of a customer seeing themselves in a brand. On the left, a small photo of a person wearing a helmet and sunglasses. A large arrow points from this photo to a stack of CLIF bars. To the right of the bars is the text 'That's me!!'. A large, faint dollar sign is visible in the background.

Humans are tribal. We look for our kind...the logos and flags that we see as..."That's me."

Two Products Ahead

Legends are relevant to something we experience in life.

- The truer we reflect our user's values and aspirations, the deeper we bond.
- The stronger their brand preference, the more products we sell.

Core Personal Drivers	Core Product Attributes
I need energy. I love the outdoors. Escapism. Belonging. Passionate. Nurturing. Feeling healthy. Self-esteem. Enjoyment of being physical. I need energy. Love of experience.	Heritage Maker Ingredients Values Attitude Design Appearance Perceived Users Product Performance

All of our customers are heroes, but we don't always show all our customers.

Two Products Ahead

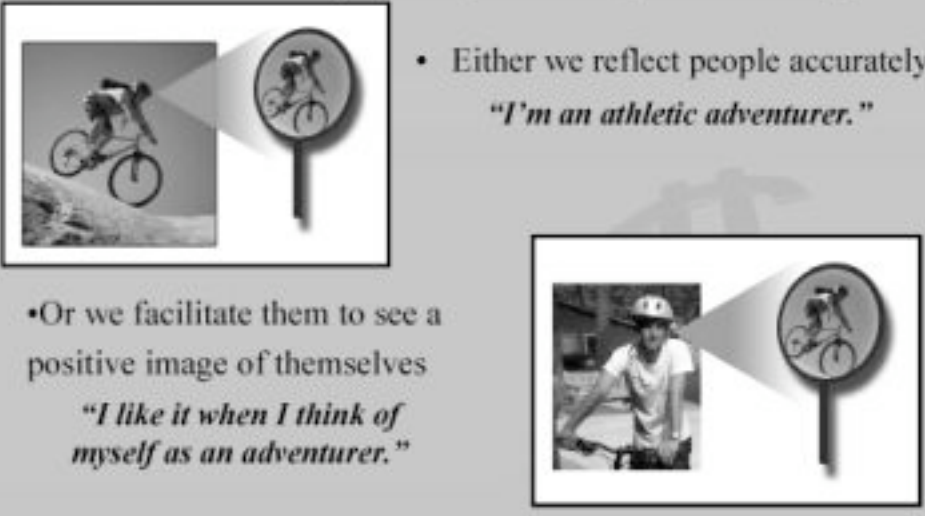
We retell stories that help us feel good about ourselves.

- If we elevate our users to heroes, we elevate our brand to a legend
- By celebrating our consumers as heroes, we celebrate ourselves

Fuel for the Modern-Day Athletic Adventurer

How do we use this information for consistent communications?

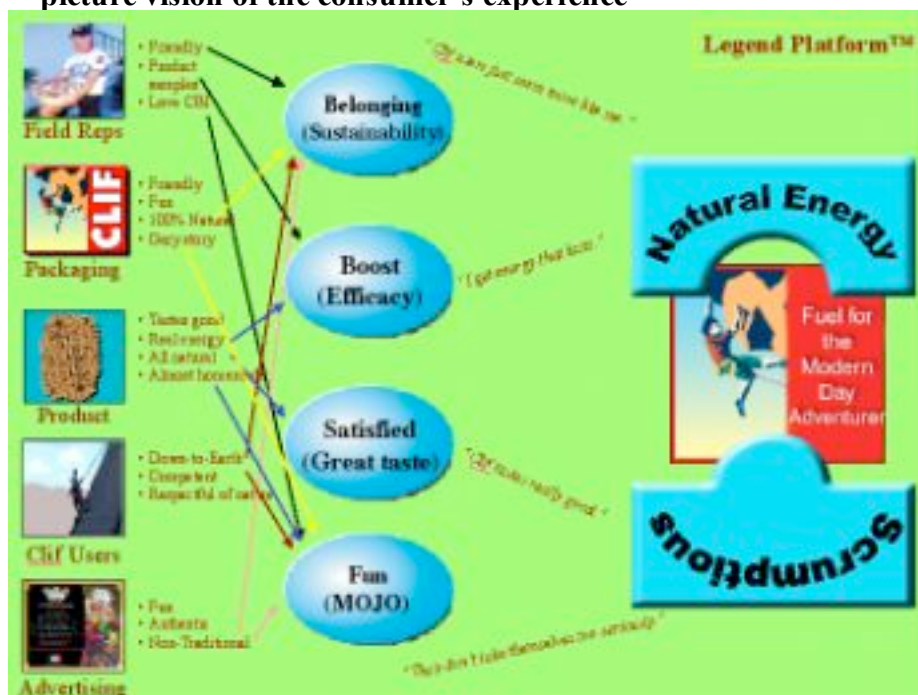
Ahead **Holding your product makes them part of your story.**



- Either we reflect people accurately
"I'm an athletic adventurer."
- Or we facilitate them to see a positive image of themselves
"I like it when I think of myself as an adventurer."

Your Legend Platform communicates your brand essence in such a way that:

- Communications have emotional objectives
 - Advertising, packaging and collateral have a unified vision to build
- Teammates know what they are working towards
 - Employees have a tool that teaches and reinforces best-practices by showing a big picture vision of the consumer's experience



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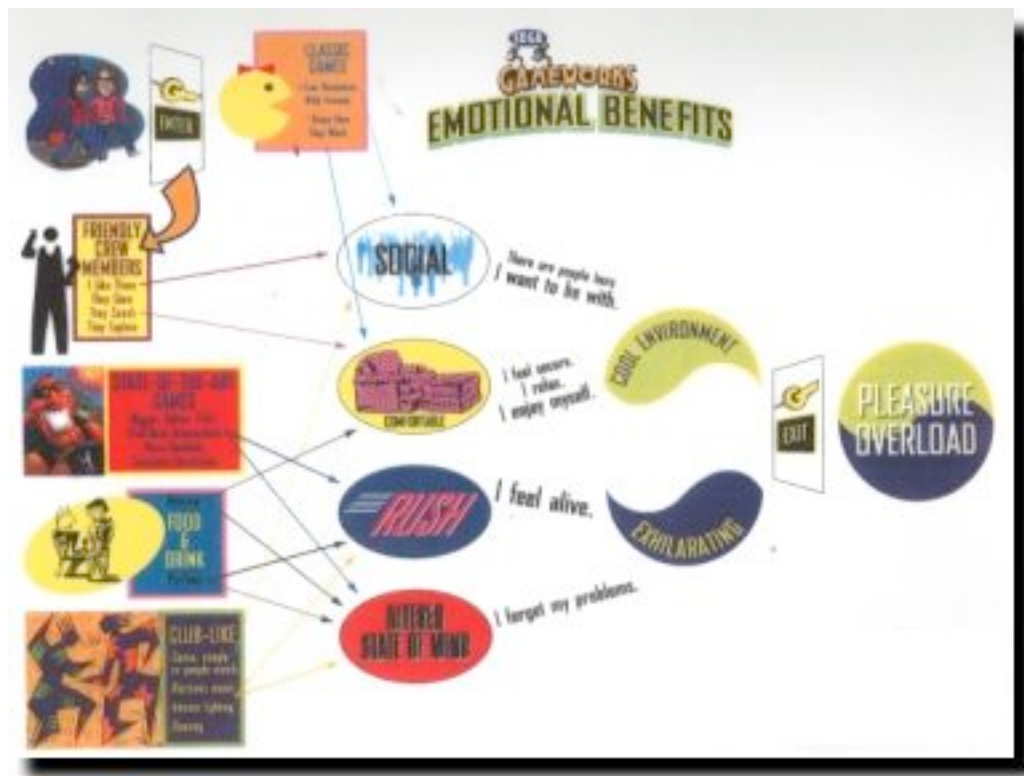
After working out this process, Clif Bar was more comfortable thinking of themselves as standing for Mojo than *Fuel For The Modern Day Adventurer*. That's fine. Their ads regularly show an athlete accomplishing something outrageously kooky (heroic) that requires extraordinary energy (fuel). That's Clif Bar Mojo. Other ads discuss the efficacy of their natural products and how good they taste. That's Clif Bar Mojo.

Clif Bar marketers have a great intuitive sense of what they are communicating because they are a community of their target audience. However, if you look at a broad portfolio of their communications you will likely find the ideas outlined above.

Branding is about sustainably making money...and making money from existing clients is paramount. Luna Bar was a great idea and proved to be extraordinarily profitable, but it wasn't an athletic bar and it wasn't designed for all Clif Bar eaters...why confuse your existing user-base? So, they named this new bar Luna Bar. Well done Clif Bar. While I worked on this account, what cracked me up was the emails they received asking if a guy eating a Luna Bar would grow breasts. The answer is no. Go ahead. These bars are tasty and good for you, nothing bad for guys in them...you just don't need the folic acid or vitamin K.

I hold that the brilliance behind Luna Bar is often under recognized...the bars have frosting on only one side...just a little bit of indulgence...a perfect design for a women's product. If you think I'm being sexist with the previous statement, you're right. Get over it. I'm here to help you make money.

Here's another example of a Legend Platform...



Note: GameWorks no longer uses this platform, from their original store in Seattle. GW evolved from this...GameWorks paid \$60,000 to Fattal & Collins for the above diagram in 1997. (I was the Brand Strategist working with Eric Hirschberg & Mike Sheldon before that team headed up Deutsch LA, where I later joined them. Deutsch LA won ad agency of the year twice while the three of us worked together. However, I was under the tutelage of Jeffrey Blish who taught me how to be an ad guy. Hirschberg is a genius. I was lucky to be there.)

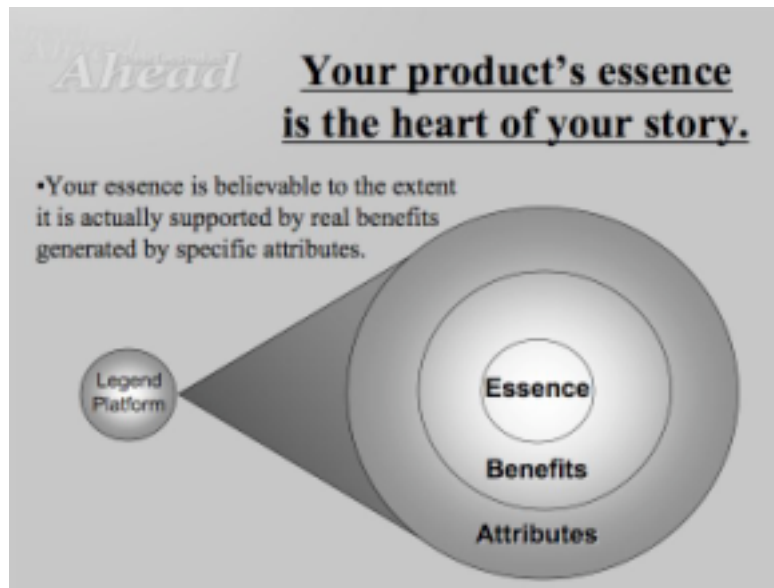
From this GameWorks' Legend Platform, we can see that GameWorks was standing for Pleasure Overload. They had the most extreme games and deliciously seasoned fries and decadent drinks. If they had continued down this path, GameWorks would look very different today. Instead, they went down a more mass and family friendly direction...which redefined the target audience.

Early on, this sheet was used to communicate the GameWorks culture to everyone from in-store employees to architects. If something in or about GameWorks was NOT communicating or reinforcing a sense of being social or comfortable, or generating an adrenaline rush or an altered state of mind, it wasn't GameWorks. The goal was for somebody leaving GameWorks to feel satiated.

Here's a minor technicality...some marketers want their brand essence to be a promise...like "pleasure overload" while others want their brand essence to be a benefit...like feeling satiated. I don't see a substantive difference between thinking of your brand essence as your primal benefit or your big promise. The key is putting your customer first in terms of their experience.

The two previous examples of a Legend Platform are well art-directed. I don't have these skills and frankly they aren't necessary for communicating to yourself or a small team. I don't want you to be stopped by a lack of graphic design capabilities.

The pictures aren't what makes this work. What makes these platforms useful is the construction and how it illustrates the relationship between your attributes, your customer benefits and your brand essence or brand promise. However, some visual thinkers find that drawing the pictures is part of how they work through the ideas. My point is that this is a worksheet. The ideas, and the interconnectedness of these ideas, is more important right now than how pretty it is. If you work at a big company and want to share it with executives, hire an art director, www.TalentZoo.com, or www.elance.com . Instead of art directing, you can fill out this form...but not yet...



First, let's look at a familiar example...Marlboro. (**HUGE caveat here...***I've never worked on a tobacco product, let alone Marlboro.*) I made this diagram up as if I was their brand manager. I'm not claiming any knowledge of the marketing of Marlboro other than what I can see in the market place and what Jay Levinson explained to me when I was interviewing him for the video *The Pitch, Poker & The Public*, edited and directed by Chris Zubryd.



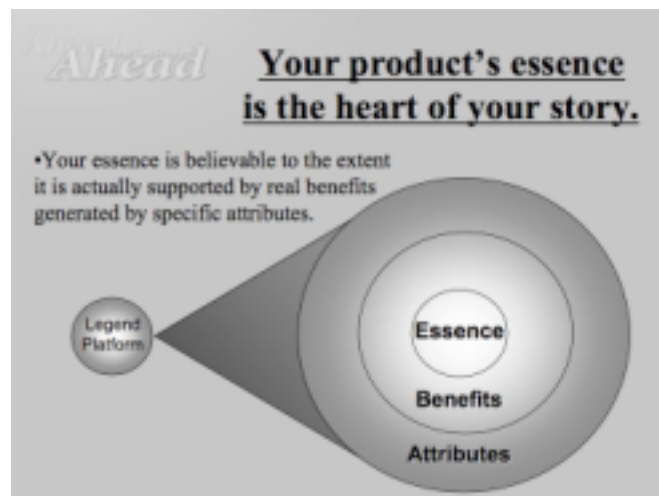
If I were their brand manager, I would know their brand essence...since I don't, **I'll pretend**

Marlboro's Essence is *Strength & Independence*. If I were their brand manager, I'd look at every communication and ask:

Does _____ reinforce a sense of Strength & Independence ?

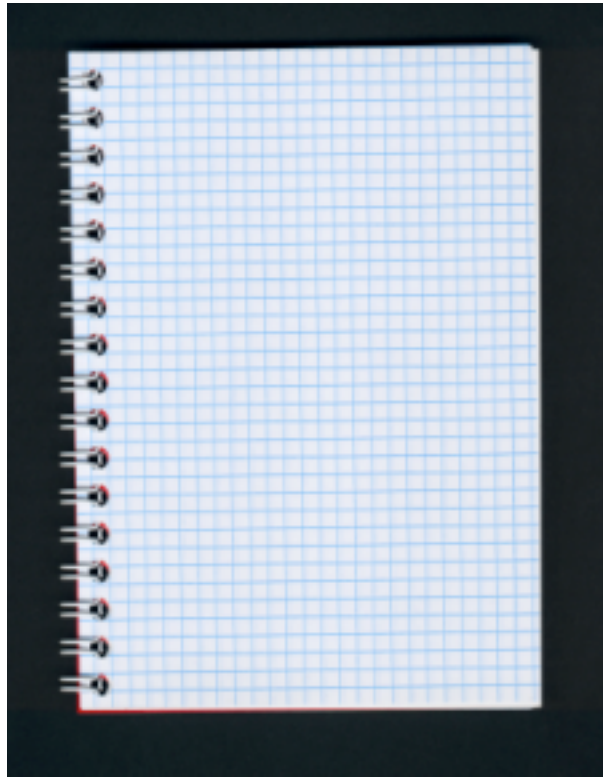
Please notice...I'm not asking if the communication reinforces a sense of cowboy. I don't think Marlboro salesmen should wear western apparel and cowboy boots. Marlboro isn't selling cowboy...they're selling Strength & Independence. Cowboy is one of their tools standing for Strength & Independence. If Marlboro was intending to stand for cowboy then they wouldn't sponsor Nascar or other non-equestrian sporting events.

Start with the outer ring of this diagram...fill-in the attributes by writing in what a consumer might see, hear and touch in terms of your product.



Next, what are the benefits that happen through these experiences? Write down more than you can use. Be bold. Make your lists of attributes and use the attributes to come up with your benefits. After you have exhausted these lists, turn the page, please. Now, put this book down and please make these lists. Thank you for your considerations.

1) You saw the exercise in the above paragraphs...right? Take a stab at these lists...Write down the benefits and attributes for your products and services.



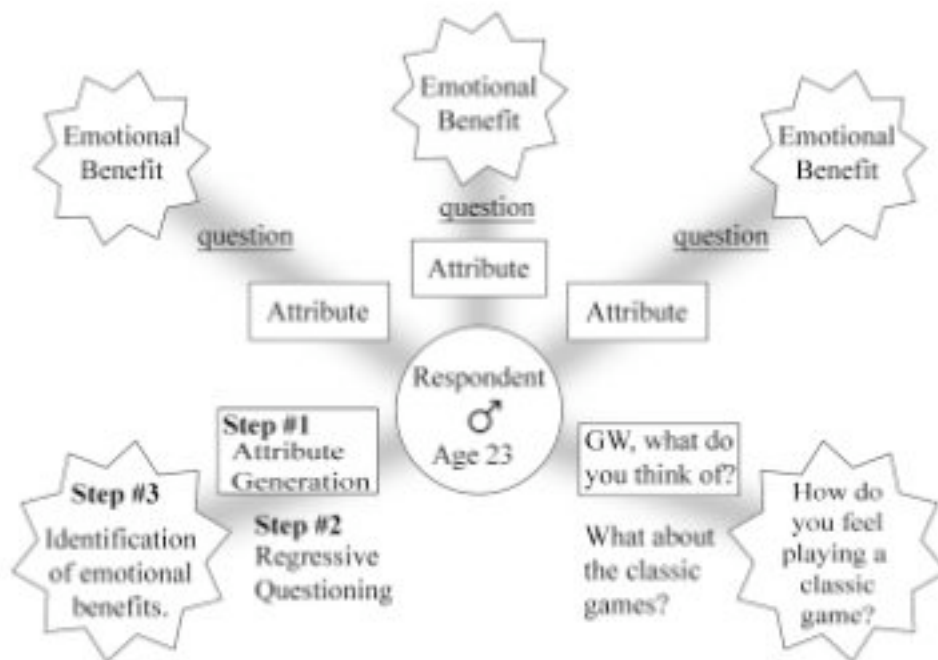
2) As you read the rest of this book carve out your own exercises and disregard what you don't find a profitable use of your time.

Important NOTE: Authenticity is important. If you are selling Elvis memorabilia and you don't love Elvis, you won't sell as much as somebody who authentically loves Elvis. So, if you don't share your target's love and passion, I suggest hiring people who do. Laws prohibit marketers from many boldface lies. Human intuition takes care of some of the rest. People can smell authenticity. Keep it real.

Chapter 8: Extracting a Brand Essence

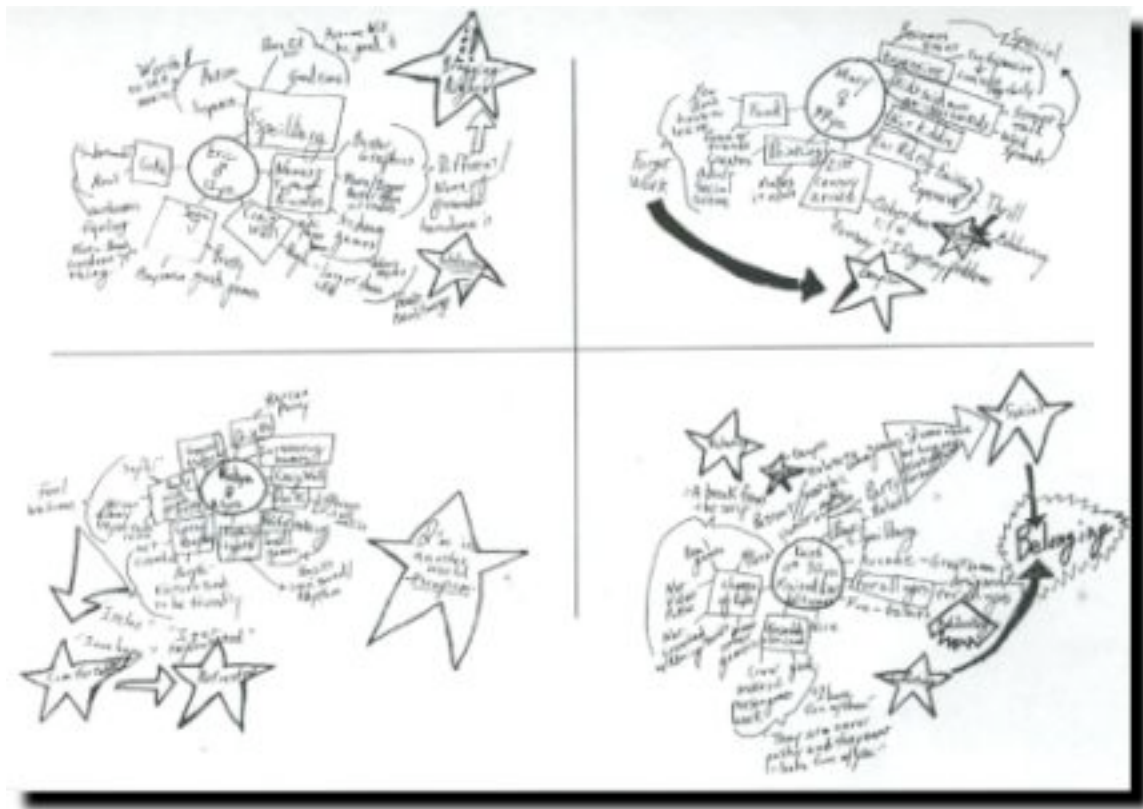
Before we discuss what to do with your lists, I'd like to talk you through how I like to approach this kind of assignment with consumer research to help guide me in extracting a brand essence. Then, we'll discuss your lists.

Research...I find loyal and happy patrons and I ask them the most open-ended question I can, "When you think of GameWorks, what comes to mind?" Below is the basic framework of the questioning process. I draw a circle and place the vital demographics of my participant in this circle. I write down each attribute they mention about GameWorks. I avoid questions that allow them to answer yes or no. When they are running out of steam, I ask, "What else can you think of?"



Then, I ask about a specific attribute, "You mentioned classic games. What do classic games bring to mind?...uh, huh. What else?...uh, huh. What's that like?" I'm listening for emotional benefits around which I

penmanship isn't great.



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You see what I did there? I connected physical attributes to emotional benefits. I looked at what emotional benefits regularly emerged from what attributes and began to fill in common quotes that supported these connections.

This draft is reviewed by management and adjusted accordingly. Management buy-in is critical...you don't have a brand vision if you are the only person that can see it. The emotional benefits are reviewed and tweaked as necessary. Together, as a group, we decide on the over-arching emotional benefit—also known as a brand promise.



However, even big budget clients don't want to budget money for consumer research to develop communications. This astounds me. How can a company spend \$20,000,000 on advertising, but they won't spend \$30,000 to understand the emotional impact of their product or service. I must suck at adequately explaining the benefits of these learnings. However, they're often willing to spend money on testing communications. Let me ask you this...How do we know what we want to test? I respect industry norms,

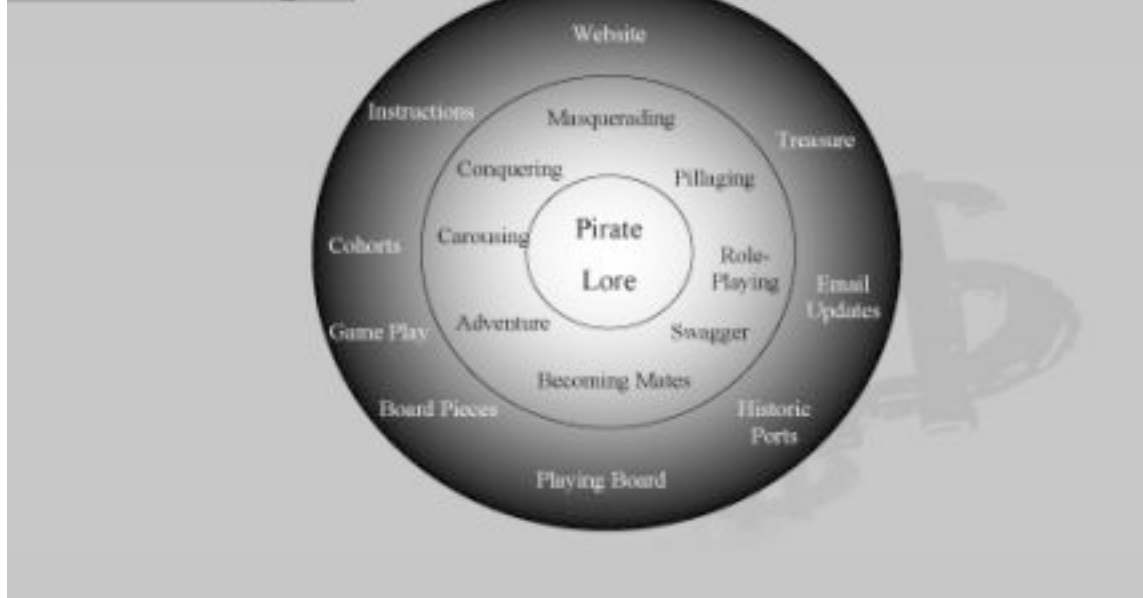
but unusual tactics are your best chance of radical success and industry norms often have little to do with strange strategies.

Without this kind of consumer research, I do what you did...I make lists of attributes and I speculate on the associated consumer benefits. A good buddy of mine Rich Goidel made a board-game called *Sea Rats* that celebrates being a pirate. Below is an initial list I made; beside this list of benefits is my amped-up version...

<i><u>Sea Rats</u></i> <i><u>Attributes</u></i>	<i><u>Sea Rats</u></i> <i><u>Benefits</u></i>	<i><u>Sea Rats</u></i> <i><u>Amped Benefits</u></i>
Website	Strategy	Swagger
Board	Fun	Pillaging
Instructions	Pirate Speak	Roll-playing
Play w/ friends	Discovery	Adventurous
Game pieces	Winning	Conquering
Die	Drinking (optional)	Carousing
Treasure	Social	Becoming mates
Real ports		Immersive
Email updates		Masquerading
Ships		Satiating
Game play		

There's a fine line between amped emotions and puffery or hype. Nobody likes vacuous hype, but when people get into this game, they really get into acting like a pirate. *Sea Rats* isn't about the board-game, but an excuse to act like a pirate. I look at the list of amped benefits and I ask myself, "What is this really?" Or, as Marcus Aurelius asked, "What is it in itself?" *Sea Rats* gives players pirate biographies and puts players into pirate scenarios, set in historic pirate ports, described in pirate terminology. Playing *Sea Rats* facilitates being a pirate.

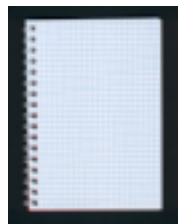
Sea Rats is not about the game play, but about what people do while they're playing the game. *Sea Rats* is a catalyst to a pirate state of mind. *Sea Rats* is a Pirate Portal—by playing the game you create a realm of pirates and bounty and booty and carousing. We landed on "***Pirate Lore***"...



How is this useful? On a single page is a schematic of the tones and goals of Rich's product and communications. Rich re-engineered the game to be less complicated and focus more on authentic pirate trivia, **reinforcing *Pirate Lore***. All of the game's collateral is chock full of pirate terms and real pirate names and places, steeped in pirate heritage that is brought to the forefront by the play of the game. Players are encouraged to bring their pirate gear. Just check out his website to see what I mean... www.ThatPirateGame.com.

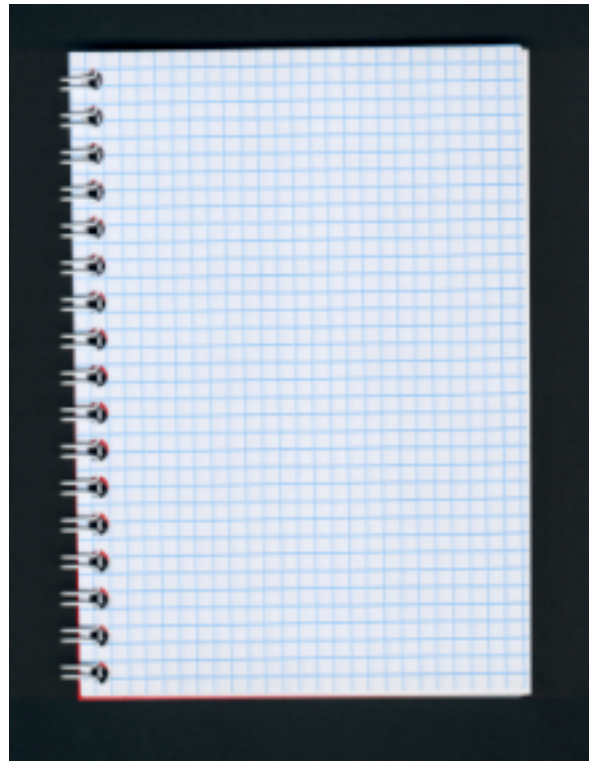
Chapter 8 Exercise

- 1) Create your own exercises based on the material discussed in this chapter.
- 2) Find a way to speak with happy and loyal customers of your competitor(s) and ask them why they are so happy. Don't sell them on yourself. Research participants can smell that agenda. Your mission in this conversation is to understand what makes your competitor's loyal customers so loyal.



Chapter 9: The Kama Sutra of Marketing: Five Basic Positions

How many ways can you cook an egg? I want you to stop reading and make a list of how many ways you can think of to cook an egg. I'm not talking about as an ingredient, I'm talking about hardboiled and fried...how many other ways can you list? Go on...make your list...



9-1

Thank you for making your list.

The list will make what I'm about to discuss more impactful, more valuable to you. I can see cooking an egg as fried, scrambled and boiled. Yes, there is over easy...but isn't that just fried and flipped-over while the yolk is still runny? There's an omlette, but that's just scrambled and then flipped over on itself. Okay, poached is different from hard-boiled or soft-boiled...but you see my point. Your level of complexity in classification is up to you. I'm going to talk about five general types of positionings...you can make up as many as you want.



How many folds are in a traditional chef's hat? 103. Why? Because there are 103 ways to cook an egg, not as an ingredient, but 103 ways to cook a single egg. That's great. I've talked to several chefs about this and they say that there are basically 15 to 23 ways to cook an egg and that rest are simply degrees of cooking. My point here is that **many times less is more**. You know this.

The taxonomy I gave you for cooking an egg—fried, scrambled or boiled—is by no means exhaustive...many would argue it should be at least 5 or 7. I agree that three ways of coking an egg is too limited to be useful...where do you put a poached egg?

Similarly, I'm going to give you a taxonomy of positionings, five basic positionings, that could be expanded to 7, or 9, or 103. For company positionings, I find this set of five useable:

What you offer What you do How you do it Who you are Why you do it

Discussing positioning without products is like playing poker without cards, it can be done, but it becomes a different game.

Let's discuss wireless communications...I'm making this chart in January of 2006, so this isn't revealing privileged information from when I was Senior Vice President, Brand Strategy Director at BBDO working on Cingular.

<u>What you offer</u> Products/Services	<u>What you have</u> Infrastructure	<u>How you do it</u> Process	<u>Who you are</u> Core value	<u>Why you do it</u> Mission/Purpose
• Metro PCS is a low-price service <i>"Permission to speak freely."</i> • Sprint/Nextel help you "work"	• Verizon touts <i>"We never stop working for you."</i> and that they have the most reliable network	• Sprint/Nextel appear to be heading in this direction by touting a different type of network	• Cingular touts excellence with <i>"Raising the bar"</i> but their ads are all about products and services without a quality claim	• Metro PCS could take on this space...<i>Because wireless shouldn't be so expensive</i>

It can be easily argued that Verizon belongs in the Who you are bucket. Fine, try that out. There are multiple right answers to this game. The purpose is to have a structure that allows you to see possibilities and begin to define the lay of the land. This is work that your customer and prospective customers won't see—that's why this work is often thought of as irrelevant and complicated...you are composing the framework that will make your company's story distinctive and attractive in the marketplace.

One of these positions is inherently stronger than the rest...Mission. If you can make your product feel like it is a mission...a worthy cause...you have energy! However, there are few things as distasteful as a phony mission which takes itself too seriously. A rare exception is a Southern California ski resort that gives excuses for missing work and not paying rent... *"Because you gotta ski!"* Then again, that mission is real to the ardent skier who needs to ski. Just be careful because a fake mission will ring false and only your prices will attract customers.

In different categories and different times, various positions may be stronger. So, what's the value? The value is that this gives you a framework to think of your company's offering. These divisions are not

mutually exclusive nor completely exhaustive, but it gives you a framework to reconsider what your company or product really offers.

In 1996 I worked on a consumer research study for Sunkist Fruit Rollups...when they were testing a re-positioning for their fruit roll-ups. They had been sold in the candy aisle and had positioned themselves as a healthy snack...An ingenious brand manager said that they were made from 100% fruit and that they should be sold in the produce department. He was trying on these different possibilities:

<u>What you offer</u>	<u>What you have</u>	<u>How you do it</u>	<u>Who you are</u>	<u>Why you do it</u>
Products/Services	Infrastructure	Process	Core value	Mission/Purpose
• Healthy snack	• <u>100% fruit</u>	• No Sugar Added	• Natural	• Healthier folks

Sunkist Fruit Rollups were surrounded by a bunch of competitive roll-up snacks and his product looked just like other roll-ups that were loaded with sugar. Consumer research showed that this made sense to consumers...the new placement in Ralphs Grocery Stores in Southern California had three times the sales of the previous location. Now, you can find all sorts of crap in the produce section...so it goes...the landscape keeps changing.

Try this for your own company...or one of your products...fill-in each bucket for your company or for a specific product, or maybe you have two or three ideas for each bucket...GREAT! Write them down:

<u>What you offer</u>	<u>What you have</u>	<u>How you do it</u>	<u>Who you are</u>	<u>Why you do it</u>
Products/Services	Infrastructure	Process	Core value	Mission/Purpose
•	•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•	•

Now, think about your competition and write down who's saying what...

<u>What you offer</u>	<u>What you have</u>	<u>How you do it</u>	<u>Who you are</u>	<u>Why you do it</u>
Products/Services	Infrastructure	Process	Core value	Mission/Purpose
•	•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•	•

Now, look and see if there are buckets that are empty. Maybe these buckets are empty because it just hasn't worked for your product...maybe it's fruitless trying to go down this path...then, again...maybe this is an untapped opportunity.

How you present your company or product affects a customer's experience and expectation...I'm not giving you answers...I'm offering you different ways to revisit familiar material that might spark new ideas, what in consumer research is referred to as an insight.

These *Five Basic Positions* are not positioning statements...these positions are considerations for what you emphasize in your framing. These positionings are guidelines and are not mutually exclusive. In fact, you could get fancy and use all five positionings in one communication. However, I suggest that you choose one over-arching positioning and consistently using this primary positioning. The subordinate positionings can be framed as reasons to believe the over-arching positioning.

The more experience you get, the easier it will be to break more guidelines with success. As you start out, keep it simple and clear by simply choosing one positioning.

The next section on framing is ***critical***. I show you how I play with ideas. Critical has four primary meanings:

Critical *adj.*

1. Expressing adverse or disapproving comments
2. Expressing analysis of the merits
3. Having the potential to be disastrous
4. ***Having crucial importance***

I primarily mean that fourth definition, having crucial importance. However, all four definitions will be appropriate at different times.

1. I express disapproving comments of an ill-named product.
2. I discuss the process of analysis of the merits of ideas and connections.
3. I use politics as an example of framing which might be disastrous to my sales.
4. Framing has crucial importance.

Your understanding of *critical* is dependent on how I use the word, what context I give the word shades its meaning.

- 1) Review the lists you created for possible positionings. How might you your communications, packaging and products change if you fully embraced that positioning as a core focus of your company?
- 2) Go bolder. Try amping up each list. Is passion emerging? Dwell on the positioning that feels passionate and then execute against whatever appears most profitable. WHENEVER POSSIBLE TEST.



Chapter 10: Framing To The Right Target Audience

Framing is about what you bring to the forefront of your customer's mind. The positioning we just discussed is a form of framing.



You can see the blue side of this cube as either the closest side or the backside. If you don't see it right-away, just give it a minute.

Powerful examples of framing are commonplace in politics. You've heard some politicians rant about the need for the **Fair Tax**. Did you know that this same tax structure has been called the **Flat Tax** and what traditional economists would call a **Regressive Tax**? Which of these names feels most compelling? Fairness, right?

What you offer

Products/Services

- Regressive tax

What you have

Infrastructure

- Simple tax

How you do it

Process

- Flat tax

Who you are

Core value

- Pro-business

Why you do it

Mission/Purpose

- Fair tax

It is difficult to argue against a Fair Tax! Labels shape our feelings and sentiments regardless of what the content really is. It is difficult to vote against a Patriot Act. What senator wants to be seen as unpatriotic? [**Some readers may mistakenly assume I'm a Democrat because I use examples provided by the dominant political party. I'm neither a Democrat nor a Republican. I don't want to get into politics here...I just fondly remember when calling a dirty politician 'a liar and a crook' was not labeled as subversive but** You're learning magic. Prepare yourself for accelerated growth. Buckle up and breathe.

patriotic & brave. I've done consumer research for Scientology, but I'm not a Scientologist. I'm a profiteer.]

Framing is about packaging ideas to make them more compelling to your target audience. Real life example: In 1998 two search engines framed their services in very different ways. Which is more compelling:

A. “A better way to search.” Or... **B.** “Find what you’re looking for.”

Why do you use a search engine? For the *joy of searching*? NO! **Your goal is to *find*.** Focusing on the consumer benefit is far more compelling than describing functionality. Yahoo! used “Find what you’re looking for.” Google touted “A better way to search.” For several years more people used Yahoo! than Google.

"Military strategists know that most battles are won before the first shot is fired—by the side that determines where, when and how an engagement is fought...Political professionals call the act of defining the terrain of engagement ‘framing the debate.’”

James Carville & Paul Begala
Buck Up, Suck Up

This battle was won at the word ***find***. However, a battle is not the war. Google is winning on MANY fronts. In 1998, web surfers didn’t know much about search engines. “*A better way to search*” was appealing to those that were web-savvy. Google is hugely successful...I’m **NOT** saying that what Google said wasn’t optimal, I’m just saying it didn’t have the mass appeal of what Yahoo! was saying. Google may not have been going for mass, they may have been seeking to more deeply entrench with investors and VCs. Different target audiences will appreciate different messages. I didn’t work on either of these accounts. I don’t know what their intentions were. My qualm with most case studies is that they are exercises in speculation or self-serving propaganda.

DEVELOP YOUR OWN GUIDELINES FOR SUCCESS. Test and refine. Be skeptical of what you cannot prove. Marketing has an agenda but it is often invisible to outsiders. The most important business skill to develop is your ability to ascertain what is making you money and how to make more. Trust your success not what I, or any expert, tells you. I might have done something lucky once, but if you can’t replicate the success this should be called entertainment.

At multiple Big Agencies, on several occasions, I have worked on crafting ads that ran in mass publications but were NOT targeting consumers. These ads looked like consumer ads, but they were really You’re learning magic. Prepare yourself for accelerated growth. Buckle up and breathe.

targeted to buyers at major retailers...to demonstrate we listened to them. These buyers then ordered more of our product and the product sold better with premium exposure to customers on the retailer's shelf. This is part of why modeling your tactics on high-visibility nationally marketed products is dangerous—unless you worked on the project you often don't know the real objectives.

Please don't talk to me about how scholastic journals are objective and an objective source of learning. Some of my best friends are ~~homosexuals~~ professors. I wish my professor friends could focus on teaching and actual research. However, most high-paying professorships have a publish-or-parish condition of employment. Professors can dig and prod, but they can't accurately report intent of marketing initiatives. Successful projects have extended families and failures appear to be orphans. I can prove to you that academic subjects aren't objective.

How come I can't find a single class on marketing pornography in any American Business School? A multi-billion dollar a year category appears grossly under studied and untaught by American Universities, except that, well...it's porn. Being perceived as endorsing pornography endangers grants and endowments that may come to a University.

Why am I discussing pornography? Remember what it felt like when I said: "*That's bunk!*"? Had I written Bullsh*t, many readers would have disregarded this whole manual. Why am I using the word now? Because I figure we know each other well enough now that I can get away with using a synonym for crap. I'm sorry if I've offended you...sincerely I'm sorry...because I want your money...and you are here because you want my skills to help you make more money. Sometimes I'm gruff. I'm sorry, but I like writing the way I talk and I tend to call stuff the way I see them. This may raise your hackles. This is good. This means I'm charging neurons that haven't been charged recently. If you keep doing what you have been doing you will get what you've always gotten, only less, because the competition is getting steeper. **You want more.**

Do you want to make *more* money or do you want to be comforted? Answer this honestly...Please. I've been studying Direct Response marketing for the past year. I find more smarts in these independent folks than I have found in Big Agencies. The average successful DR practitioner is better read and more data savvy than You're learning magic. Prepare yourself for accelerated growth. Buckle up and breathe.

99% of the folks I've met in traditional agencies. However, I find remarkably little coverage of Direct Response marketing in business schools. These are masters of effectiveness. Carl Rove started in Direct Response marketing. It's difficult to argue with effectiveness. I admire and study effective persuasion. I don't always agree with how this technology is used.

KiiC

I don't mean to burn bridges, but I do. I owe an apology to the brand manager on KiiC, the defunct product name for Cingular's pre-paid cell phones, a doomed product that was finally put out of its misery with the merger with AT&T Wireless. GO Phone is far better. You said, "KiiC, Like Keep In Contact, but there's an extra 'i'."

Dear KiiC Brand Manager,

I'm sorry I hurt your feelings when I worked at BBDO. And, I'm sorry if I'm hurting your feelings now, BUT YOUR BABY WAS UGLY. If you're a mom, I'm not talking about your featherless-biped you call your child, I'm talking about KiiC. Stupid name against your larger target.

Yes, this name makes sense against 14 year-olds looking to get a phone without having to sign a contract...But the vast majority of people buying a prepaid phone are credit-challenged adults, not 14 year-olds.

Credit challenged folks don't like to be reminded they have bad credit. They respond to respect. THEY DON'T WANT TO FEEL DEROGATED. If 13% of the 18+ year-old customers wanting to buy a phone fail the credit screen...which phone is easier to sell them next? A KiiC phone or a GO phone.

Now, I handled this poorly. I shouldn't have said in an aghast voice, "Why would we name it *that*?" I'm sorry. That just came out of my mouth. But seriously...how the *fornication* can you think like that? I'm seriously curious how this made sense to you.

With regret,

Ben

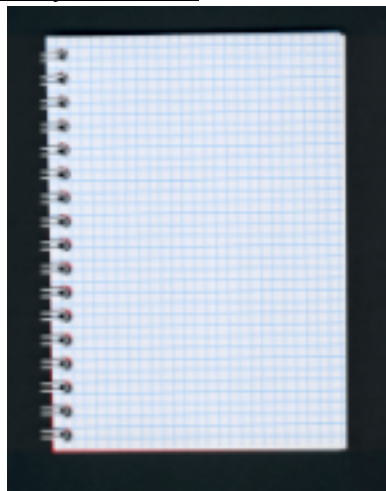
WARNING: Don't do drugs and fall in love with what you create. If you insist on writing drunk, then at least edit sober...and test your ideas with real customers.

If you want to hire me to justify your failures I can do that, but I have a hard time being told I'm being hired to help somebody make money only to learn that that's not the objective. I can help you get what you want, however the job is easier when you know what you want and can articulate these objectives in specific measurable results.

Marketing is about influencing people, being a social engineer. I happen to specialize in marketing with direct profit agendas. But I am most proud of work I did at TG Madison for The American Cancer Society. The specific measurable result was unreasonable, to get substantively more men aged 50+ to get a colonoscopy, an uncomfortable procedure where a patient doesn't eat for 12 hours and then has a scope stuck up their ass to assess whether or not they might have cancer. We had about a \$10 million dollar budget. Generally, you can't do squat on a national level with a \$10 million advertising budget. We spent only \$6 million advertising to the general population of men. We spent \$4 million advertising to doctors explaining to them what we were telling *their* patients. We got great results. Why? Because we leveraged the doctors' egos. Doctors need to be experts. By telling doctors we were educating their patients they absorbed our message and began encouraging their patients to get a colonoscopy. This may occur as a strange strategy. It would have been very difficult to ascertain our objectives from the outside. Furthermore, The American Cancer Society would never allow TG Madison to brag about this strategy in public because this strategy may strain the relationship between ACS and doctor associations.

Before you decide on an optimal framing you must make sure you are addressing your optimal target. Your optimal target will have many triggers to take action. In what ways might you best compel your optimal target?

Exercises: Who is most important to reaching your sales goals? This is your real target. What are the real politics? How can you work the politics in your favor?



Chapter 11: Structured Creativity...Framing Tools

Most jazz musicians are also really good at playing scales. Most abstract expressionist painters are really good at figure drawings. In the next chapter I'll discuss more free form ideating...generating ideas like Orville Redinbocker popped popcorn.

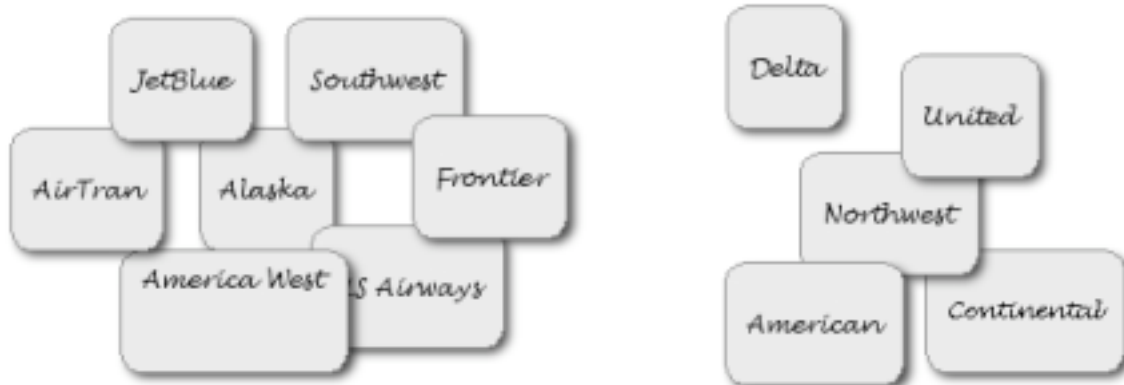
I learned commercial idea manipulation from focus group moderators. It is amazing how resistant business folks can be to doing exercises, themselves, that they find value in watching consumers do. If you want to work with me, I might make you uncomfortable at times...but I'll probably help you make more money. What I'm giving you in this manual is what I do before I facilitate a Brand Strategy Offsite for companies. You can do these exercises yourself, or you can just keep reading and think that reading about these exercises will help you make money.

I want you to get some index cards and write the names of your competitors on the cards...the example I'm going to use is Airlines. At WONGDODY I worked on Alaska Airlines through the 9/11 repositioning...but that's a story for another forum.

Write down the name of all your competitors on index cards or blank pages torn into quarters...this doesn't need to be neat and tidy...ripping-up paper will work for this exercise...just do the work, please. Thank you.



Now, arrange them. How? It doesn't matter. Just arrange them; a simple grouping can be big and small companies...Here's a different set of cards divided into big and small airlines.

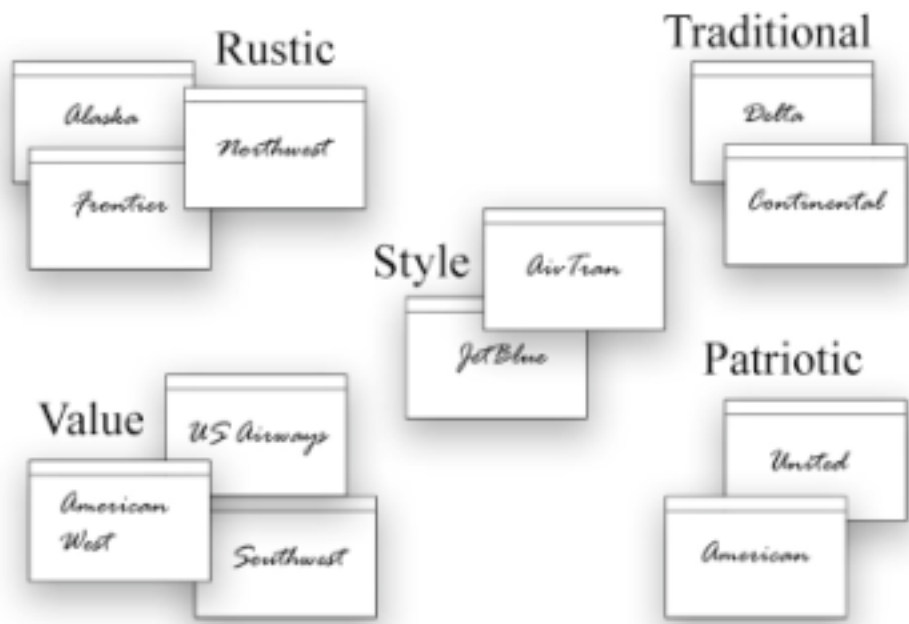


You can just mess them around and look for connections.



We're looking for ways of seeing the landscape that we haven't noticed before.

Big and small isn't likely to produce insights...**What's an insight? Something that makes you go *Aha!* Or, hmmm.** A perspective that allows you to see your subject in a way you have never looked at it before. Here's another simple organization...by general positioning. The labels I've thrown in are very basic...



Now, I might change the labels on each group. “*Style*” kind of sucks...If a new label changes the way I see the groups...I might change the groups around...and I take notes on what I see...I find notes help me sort the information later.

This is part of the prep work I do before I lead Brand Strategy Offsite for companies. At J. Walter Thompson we called it a Day 1. Working with OMD it was called Checkmate (A very comprehensive and accessible planning system) and other brand agencies have different names for their systems.

Many times I would do exercises like this with participants in focus groups...then in the Brand Strategy Offsite I would present these findings. Since you’re reading this book, I imagine you are doing this for your own company. So you are doing this for real...you are playing with money that is real to you. I love that. I can get frustrated working with corporate heads that are playing with money that isn’t real to them...because they just want to have fun.

I imagine you are actually working through these exercises...I hope I’m correct...now take your brand card and randomly pick up two others, and put two together and one to the side...

Both pride themselves on
affordability

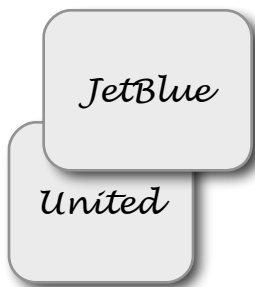


Premium and a
VIP room



This work can seem tedious. It's not like there is one formula that allows you to get a great positioning, or a computer program would be the best marketer...Hell, that might happen. Computers can now consistently beat humans...cool stuff on that, but again that's not what we're hear—woops typo--here to talk about...here's another example...

Primary color is blue



Primary color is red



Get a customer to tell you their perceptions. Doing this with customers will yield different responses than doing this exercise with a corporate employee or executive. With customers you want to talk to at least two groups:

1. Loyals—Those that love your product and service and are sticking with it; learn what they love about your brand and why they are excited
2. Your core prospects—Those that you are hoping will become loyalists but haven't

Learning what your missed prospects see is often fascinating, but most company owners or brand managers can't have this conversation with a prospect because they start arguing with the participant.

Perceptions aren't wrong...perceptions are perceptions...a belief might be wrong and that creates a perception in prospects that cost you money. This is fabulous to learn...to discover how they came to this belief.

This chapter might be perceived as esoteric by some readers...some readers may be put off by the word esoteric, because they don't know that it means that the subject matter is difficult and likely to be understood by just a few. I'm okay with this. Framing your product from scratch takes work...mental work...and **Play**.

Play with your cards for 10 minutes, taking notes on what you find...Then, I want you to take a ten-minute

Recess

Seriously...don't do this for ten minutes. Thank you.

Recess is over...

Framing Continued...

Framing can be as much about what you don't say as it can be what you do say. For some folks one word can kill a relationship...so why use them? My editor wanted me to take the Bullsh*t paragraph out because he thought it might hinder sales. I successfully argued that stretching your mind is part of what is required for working on framing—more traditional thinking is coming—but have you noticed how this chapter jumps around a lot? This is intentional. New stimulus sparks ideas.

Try this...just for kicks...look at this picture of a banana:



Now list the attributes of a banana...

- Curved
- Comes in bunches
- Soft interior
- Sliceable
- Yellow
- Peel-able

Now, think of your product or company; if your product adopted one of these attributes...how could it be different? Go through each attribute and answer that same question.

Your mind can do marvelous maneuvers...

You can read this...

You're learning magic. Prepare yourself for accelerated growth. Buckle up and breathe.

It hardly matters in what order the letters are in a word. The only really important thing is that the first and last letter be in the right place. The rest can be a total mess and you can still read it without too many problems. This is because the human mind does not read every letter by itself, but the word as a whole. Amazing. I always thought spelling was overrated!

Back to linear thinking...

Most companies have brand guidelines...what they will and won't say to customers...simply saying that you won't use profanity is barely a beginning.

Nordstrom is concerned that people refer to the company as Nordstroms. So, one of their brand guidelines is that communications never use the possessive: Nordstrom's. There is an Annual Shirt Sale at Nordstrom...never Nordstrom's Annual Shirt Sale. Nordstrom doesn't sell lingerie...they sell 'discrete apparel' among many other synonyms.

Cingular has a little logo/icon that jumps around and says words and phrases via a cute thought bubble. Part of my job was to re-write the guidelines for this icon. Originally, the brand guidelines suggested that the icon could never bend or have a fluid movement, but when Cingular became a sponsor of Special Olympics this felt wrong. It felt like we could be misconstrued as making fun of these Olympiads. So we broke that rule for those spots.

We went several steps further in defining the logo's character. We made a list of two positive attributes that...wait, let me have you do this before I tell you what we did. Make a list of 10 positive words. Then go

back down the list and write a similar word, a synonym in the next column. Both lists should only be positive words...

1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

We did this exercise for Cingular's icon...actually we had a list of about 400 paired attributes and chose either 12 or 14 for our final list. We chose only one word per paired attributes. The icon character was then defined as more approachable than sociable among many other distinctions.

Why get this specific? Each of these distinctions is part of your framing. Using consistent language helps build a stable idea in your customer's head. Think of people you know...if somebody has mood swings, do you feel settled around them? Mood swings can be disorienting. Using different verbiage in your communications feels like mood swings to a reader.

This is often where branding gets a bad name. Consistency is important...the exact hue of the color of your logo is less important. It looks unprofessional to use five different fonts on a page...where do you draw the line? I don't have an answer for you.

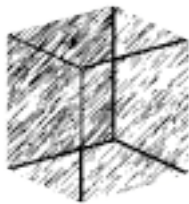
Repetition breeds familiarity...repetition can create meaning.

You're learning magic. Prepare yourself for accelerated growth. Buckle up and breathe.



This image can mean that I want you to loosen your association and try seeing something two different ways. Repetition also creates continuity and carves out a voice and a mental terrain.

I've used all three of these images to promote my work...Some aren't as appropriate as others for certain audiences.



I've used the three images above to target three different audiences. Know your target. The one on the middle I use for teens.

“...strategy is defined as the way in which a corporation endeavors to differentiate itself positively from its competitors, using relative corporate strengths to better satisfy customer needs.”

-*Mind of the Strategist*
Kenichi Ohmae

How Framing Paid My Way Through College

I paid my way through college as a magician. I made more money than most magicians with far better hand-skills. I was hired for more shows than most and was paid more for each show than most magicians could expect. I was a better showman than most magicians, but more importantly, I was a better marketer.

I would begin one routine by asking, “Are you ready to see the most amazing card trick you have ever seen in your entire life?” I would ask this seriously, and get them to promise to tell me whether the trick was the best they had ever seen. Almost always, the person would say that it was the most amazing trick they had ever seen.

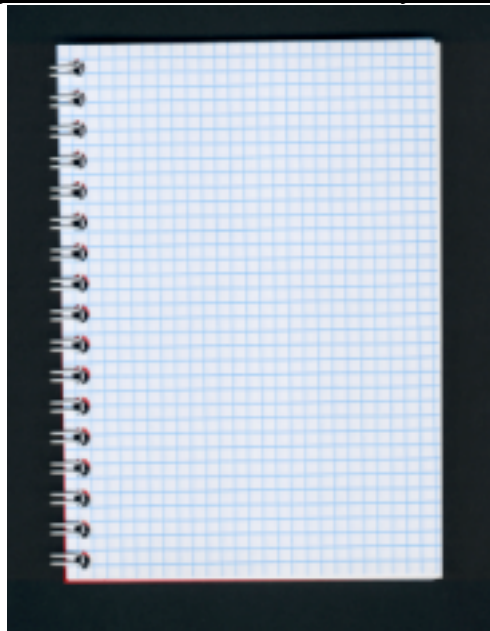
The affect of framing *the trick* as “the most amazing trick you have ever seen” told the audience how to view the trick...Psychological experiments have shown that telling somebody what to expect shapes their experience—tell somebody they are about to taste something sweet or bland affects the experience of taste.

Your communications should tell your target audience what to expect. The effect will be sales.

My framing of the card trick affected the way people saw me as a performer. I got more shows. People would call me and say, “My friend John said that he saw you do the most amazing card trick he had ever seen in his entire life. I need you at my party.” This enabled me to charge a premium for my services...now, that’s magic.

Chapter 11 Exercise

1) Do you give your customers a repeatable phrase that frames your product/service well? Do you give them this framing on the packaging so they have it in their head when they first touch your product?



Chapter 12: Creativity on Demand...Why Ad Agencies Can't Brainstorm

Brainstorming with a professional creative is a little like playing scales with a jazz musician...the process isn't bringing out the best in either of you. First, creatives have internalized many of the basics of brainstorming. Second, most agency-lead brainstorming sessions don't adhere to the fundamental guidelines set up by the man who coined the word.

Kennesaw State University's Center for Creativity and Innovation teaches creativity on demand to their MBA students and to business folks across the country. The program, Creativity On Demand Environment (C.O.D.E) drives home how to manage focused chaos i.e. turning corporate initiatives into actions, helping teams work better together and coming up with innovative ideas to better compete in a "flat world". Applied creativity is the backbone to innovation.

Professor Gary Selden and Creativity Expert Harry Vardis teach how to:

- Increase the quantity of ideas you can generate by 4 to 12 times
- Enhance the applicability of new ideas
- Evaluate and improve ideas through the development process
- Identify the type of creativity that is most productive for different phases in bringing an idea to market

Harry Vardis' book, *Potatoes? Not Yet! 33 Ways to Grow and Harvest Your Best Ideas* captures the principles of creative problem solving and can give you insights on how to get the most out of your teams. The banana exercise in the previous chapter is from their class.

I've helped teach this class for the last couple years by explaining to the students that their assumptions is what holds them back. I taught them how to go beyond the obvious and look at the assumptions by changing perspectives. We see students more than quadruple their ability to generate lists of ideas in less than an hour. How do we do this? Magic fairy dust of course. That, and we simply request participants turn-off their judging for a period of time.

We also immediately give them two brainstorming tools that are done with post-it notes in a group:

1. Brainstorming with Post Its—Give everybody a pad of Post-It notes and ask them to write their ideas down and hand them in as fast as they can...but the assignment is to keep writing...even if they are writing “I’m stuck” but any novel idea gets said allowed and others are allowed to write down any idea even if somebody else said it...just keep writing!
2. Brain Writing—Prepare several sheets of paper with six Post-Its on each side of the page. Everybody starts by writing two ideas on the top of a page and passing that page into the center of the table. As you take your next sheet of paper you are open to either building on an idea on that sheet or writing a new idea. You need a few sheets prepared for each person. This exercise does not require a facilitator saying them out loud until the allotted time is through, but a facilitator should be encouraging the group to keep writing. How long? You choose...say 5 minutes?

See a commonality between those two exercises? Just write...the best way to create something is to start creating. Many people are hesitant to share ideas out loud...so writing helps them generate more ideas than they ever had before, on their own, just listing on a single sheet of paper. Yes, many of the ideas are silly...this is good. Silliness helps the creative process.

Everybody is creative. Somewhere our educational system convinced kids they weren’t creative. From my experience in these classes about half the students in these classes would label themselves as “not creative.” Harry, and other creativity experts, suggest that it is not a matter of “How creative are you?”, but “How *are you* creative?”.

Each one of us has a different way of expressing our creative self. This is very important when forming teams so that the team is formed according to objectives and the preferences of the members. Harry explains that if you want 200 ideas in 24 hours get a group of “Ideators” together and give them the challenge to work on. If you put together a team of “Clarifiers” all you are going to get in 24 hours is 100 different ways of looking at the problem. Somehow many folks view creativity exclusively as the ability to generate lists of ideas. Innovation involves more than just having a novel idea...innovation is about making a novel idea useful because it meets certain criteria.

We all have preferences. Do you prefer to...

- Clarify a problem? Do you like asking questions and delineating distinctions?
- Ideate on a problem? Are you raring to generate lists of possibilities?
- Develop plans? Do you get anxious when action isn't being planned out or when you see plans that have gaping holes in them?
- Implement existing plans? Do you love bringing ideas to fruition and get satisfaction from making something work as it was intended?

Knowing yourself helps ease you through the innovation process...both in knowing where you need help and knowing when it's your turn to shut up. More about these distinctions can be found at

www.FourSight.com.

Creativity legend Alex Faickney Osborn postulated, and others have proven, that separating divergent thinking from convergent thinking will substantively improve the quality of ideas generated. You start with an objective and flesh out a bunch of possibilities for this objective. Then, you reach a saturation point and you say *enough* and you begin culling and improving and narrowing your idea until you have an action plan with specific tactics.



The first rule of divergent thinking is to defer judgment...we'll get to that in a minute. The most impressive part of the class for many is when we teach them in very short order how to quadruple the number of ideas they can generate on demand. Suddenly increasing one's ability to generate ideas isn't brand-new technology...just under utilized. The "O" in BBDO stands for Osborn... Alex Faickney Osborn, the guy who coined the word brainstorming. Here's the funny part: when I worked as a Senior Vice President at BBDO I never saw anybody run their brainstorming sessions as Osborn suggested was optimal, despite Wikipedia's

assertion to the contrary. In fact, at the seven advertising agencies I've worked at I never saw a "brainstorming" session run along the simple guidelines Osborn outlined in *Your Creative Power*, a book he published in 1948.

Osborne's Rules For DIVERGENT Thinking

1. Defer judgment
2. Strive for quantity
3. Seek wild and unusual ideas
4. Build on ideas

I hear an agency account executive cursing me... "I tell my groups to defer judgment: I begin my brainstorming sessions saying that there are no bad ideas." Yeah, well how's that working for you? There are bad ideas. This is about innovation and applied creativity. This isn't self-expression and finger painting for pleasure. We're here to make money. Some ideas are more likely than others to help us make money.

A typical brainstorming session at an ad agency would go something like this...the brainstorming facilitator says, "Our client spent \$3,000,000 on a sponsorship for The Masters golf tournament and this means that we get to run an 'event' with the audience that will run after the 9th hole. What should we do? There are no bad ideas...what do you think?"

Now, a situation is helpful. Damn helpful. But we need focus and clarity before we go hog wild on ideas. The notion of deferring judgment isn't quite the same thing as saying there are no bad ideas.

Effective Brainstorming

Start by stating the objective and coming up with 20 ways in which we might meet that objective.

START WITH AN OBJECTIVE.

That's key! This is applied creativity. We don't need to be drill sergeants but we aren't doing this for the joy of playing with ideas either. Without an objective we flounder without direction.

Maybe there isn't a specific objective, yet. *THEN A FIRST STEP would be to establish an objective...* "Our client spent \$3,000,000 on a sponsorship for The Masters golf tournament and this means that we get to run an 'event' with the audience that will run after the 9th hole. What would be a beneficial outcome for this game? What do we want the viewer at home to experience from watching this event?"

You're learning magic. Prepare yourself for accelerated growth. Buckle up and breathe.

This will deeply engage the clarifiers. Create a list of possible objectives. Then for each objective ask the group, “In what ways might we (insert objective) ?”

Now, while you’re doing this...defer judgment.

- Instead of saying, “That’s stupid.” Say, “That’s different.”
- Instead of saying, “We can’t do that.” Try reframing the question, “Great. Now, in what ways might we (insert objective) for less than \$20,000 ?”
- Instead of saying, “No, but...” Say, “Yes, and...”
- Instead of saying, “No we can’t...” Say, “How can we...? Or “How to...””

Ask open-ended questions. The facilitator of the brainstorming session should be asking about *possibilities* “How might...?”. Ask about Target Audiences, Product Attributes & Benefits. If a new target audience is discovered, then what product attributes are they appreciating? Why? What benefit would they enjoy? Allow for absurdity. And push for the absurd. What if we were targeting cows (yeah, I know cows can’t read...just flow with us...let go and have fun)...If we targeted cows what would we be saying? Why do they appreciate our product. What’s the benefit to them? Is that a new benefit? What other target audiences would gain from this benefit?

Three things to listen for:

- New target audiences
- New important product attributes
- New product benefits which satisfy some need

Here’s the thing: your first 20 ideas are often predictable. Your next 20 ideas are often just quirky, and then in the next 20 ideas are usually some juicy, usable nuggets. 60 ideas in a single sitting? Yes. And more. Recently, I worked with Harry Vardis on a brainstorming project for a large soda manufacturer that is based here in Atlanta. In three hours a team of 14 people generated nearly 400 ideas.

The ‘obvious-ideas, quirky-ideas, juicy-ideas’ cycle repeats itself but it’s not very predictable in terms of number of ideas. The point is that you need to push hard and work yourself and your group to get more and more ideas. Quantity does produce quality.

You will keep your momentum if you ask “What else?” Instead of “Any more?” We will often say no if given the chance. Don’t ask “yes” and “no” questions.

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When the group runs out of steam...give them a task:

- Open a magazine and look for the first picture not of a human. Look at this picture.
 - What does this do?
 - What are the benefits of that?
 - How can we have similar benefits with our product?
 - Who is this product designed for?
 - How might we appeal to them? If we did appeal to this target audience...who else might we appeal to?

When you are finished generating possibilities...it is time to start organizing your options.



RULES OF CONVERGENCE

- Be positive
- Be deliberate
- Check your objectives
- Consider Novelty

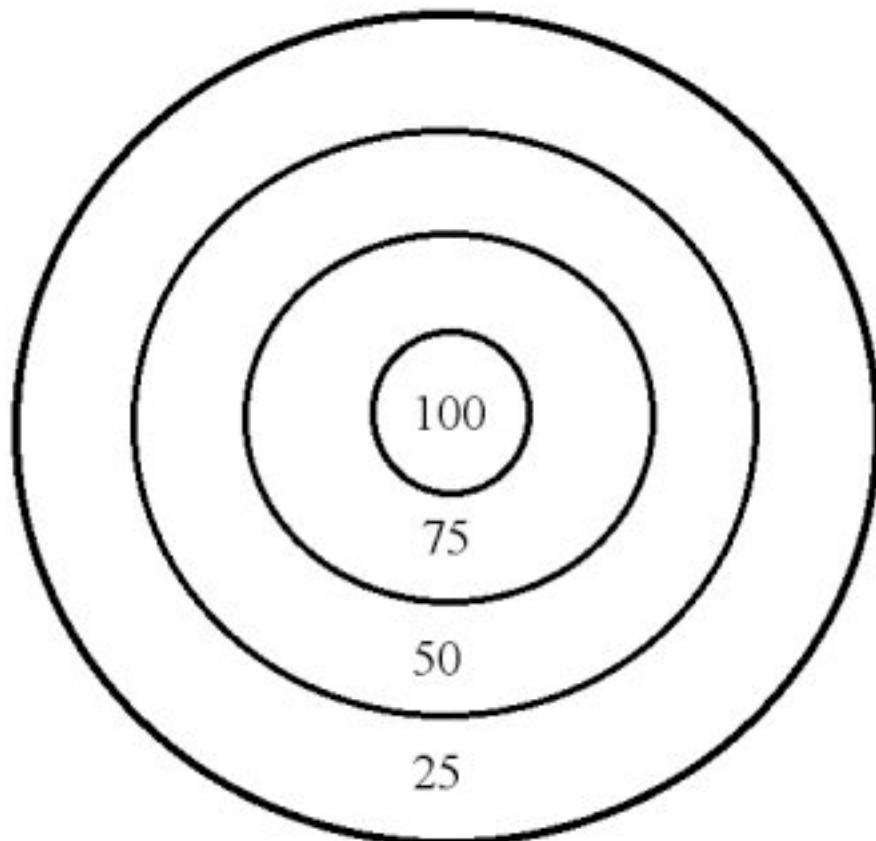
Applied creativity is not a *like it/don't like it* game. This is about making money. This is not about art...we have an agenda. What's our agenda again? What's the real purpose of this creative task...and don't say to make more money. In what way are we making more money? One of those answers gave us an objective. Looking at a given prospective solution...does this prospective solution enhance the likelihood of this possibility?

Here are a couple of tools:

1. Bull's eye
2. Matrix Evaluation

Bull's Eye

You either created your ideas on Post-Its, or now is the time to transfer them to Post-Its. Now, place each idea on this Bull's Eye. Put ideas you see as 'spot-on' in the center of the Bull's Eye. Then, put the rest of the ideas in other rings, just go with your gut. This isn't an exact science but a down-and-dirty sorting mechanism.



Okay, now anything that's not a 100...ask, "In what way's could we improve this idea to make it more powerful, likeable, attractive?" Notice the exact words are not important. This is just a down and dirty sorting mechanism that also enables asking how we can improve on ideas.

Matrix Evaluation

Take the Post-Its from both the 75 and 100 area of the Bull's Eye. If you have a bunch in the 100, then just use those ideas. Now, let's get granular about our objectives.

You had a major objective. You probably also have other considerations.

Let's pretend we worked at BBDO or Cingular today, with their tagline of raising the bar and we're brain storming because our client spent \$3,000,000 on a sponsorship for The Masters golf tournament and this means that we get to run an 'event' with the audience that will run after the 9th hole. Let's say our objective is to reinforce the concept of "raising the bar" while people are having fun. First off, that's complicate, but most groups have a hard time defining a single objective so let's play with this convoluted objective.

What's raising the bar? You've talked this over when you defined the objective... and you know from your Brand Essence material that Raising the Bar is about increased quality... mostly through better reception and better voice quality.

In generating ideas, you had 3 ideas that after being enhanced were in the 100 inner circle:

- Game: A chip shot over a bar to land on the green; the person who hits it over the highest level of a bar wins a prize
- A social in the Golf course's bar where with a banner that says "Raising the bar!" And the announcers recap the highlight shots of the day's competition
- A spectacle of "telephone" where participants are in remote places on the course and receive a call and repeat a phrase and if the same phrase comes back as goes out they all win a prize

Then, you agree on more criteria. It would have been handy to have this list when you started, but usually this list isn't fleshed out until you have begun generating ideas. Don't worry. You can always ask... In what ways might we...?

Now, rate these on a scale of 1-5

	Easy to get “Raising the bar”	Involves a handset	Memorable/ novel/ distinctive	Communicates better reception	<u>Score</u>
Game—chip shot	5	1	5	1	12
Social in Bar w/ day’s highlights	2	1	3	1	7
Telephone spectacle	2	5	1	5	13

Based on this scoring the Telephone Spectacle is your winner, but maybe these criteria aren’t all equal.

If we create a weighting system...on a scale of 1 to 5 how important is each of these criteria. Now, multiply the score by this weighting...

	Easy to get “Raising the bar”	Involves a handset	Memorable/ novel/ distinctive	Communicates better reception	<u>Score</u>
Optional weighting	5	3	3	2	
Game—chip shot	5-25	1-3	5-15	1-2	45
Social in Bar w/ day’s highlights	2-10	1-3	3-9	1-2	24
Telephone spectacle	2-10	5-15	1-3	5-10	38

Now, the Game w/ the Chip Shot is our winner. Your gut is to be trusted. These are just tools to help you work through decisions and uncover considerations. One idea might just feel right...I suggest you trust your gut. However, I believe that ease of communication is of paramount importance.

When I worked on Baskin-Robbins at Deutsch, B/R constantly did new-product-development research. They had a hot-cookie and ice cream sundae that I loved! Scrumptious. This product would entail franchisees buying a mini-oven to bake the cookies, but that’s a minor consideration if we had a hit. Research scores showed that based on name and description folks weren’t that interested in this product...but once they tried it

they needed to have another. At least planned on having another. The taste rating and planned purchase rating were off the charts! The product was launched and quickly failed.

We never over-came the communication roadblock. People won't try what they can't absorb. Yes, we absorb ideas. Ideas infect our mind. I'd rather have a very contagious idea to reach more people than an obtuse idea that only penetrates a few but does so more substantively. If that product was to be successful we needed to break out of the way we had been promoting other products...with a hanging sign. We needed some sort of sampling promotion...or a taste guarantee. This was a perfect couponing opportunity. Or, a way to celebrate Presidents' Day...with Cookies & Ice Cream. We needed an excuse to get folks trying this scrumptious delight and the word of mouth might have taken hold.

The good news is that this type of thinking has tools that you can use. The bad news is that there isn't a blue print for success. These tools are for you to draft your own blueprint.

I whole-heartedly endorse Mark Joyner's www.simpleology.com because he offers tools to empower people to get what they want. It is the best, most concentrated toolbox I have found and the entire first course is completely free. Applying that first course to your company is also completely viable. Pretend your company is a person and apply goal setting and consistency increasing tools to your company...that's branding: upping your effectiveness through increased intentionality.

Mark Joyner sends out a week-day email for Simpleology. One email asked who said, "Every revolutionary idea seems to evoke three stages of reaction. They may be summed up by the phrases: (1) It's completely impossible. (2) It's possible, but it's not worth doing. (3) I said it was a good idea all along."

The answer is Arthur C. Clark, but the point Mark is making, and the structure in which he is illustrating his points is what I'll close out this chapter with.

Mark is teaching folks how to do the impossible. Commonly thought of as magic...but, magic is just a label like UFO...a label that helps us process what we don't understand. I like one quote which you read earlier in this book...just like J.K. Rowling, I'm not afraid to repeat important ideas...

"Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic."

Arthur C. Clark

Clarke's Third Law

In working with creativity experts for the last two years...I've spent time on this issue. They label it creative problem solving. When approaching something that at first feels/appears impossible these creativity experts ask, "In what ways might we..._____?" The blank is filled in with a specific goal that may contribute towards a working solution.

This may sound like hedging the task, but an indirect approach often proves useful.

A real key to successful problem solving is regularly discussed in Simpleology: focus. A focused objective is key to consistent effective problem solving.

How many times have you been invited to a brainstorming session and been told that there are no bad ideas? Bunk! Yes, in the process of brainstorming we shouldn't slow ourselves down by judging. TRUE! Please follow Osborn's 1st Law of Brainstorming: defer judgment. But judgment will come and ideas will be deemed unusable. So, how do we increase our productivity while brainstorming without diminishing our momentum? Focus. We focus by asking a guiding question...In what way might we _____ ?

I use this magic, I mean technology, all the time. You see, I'm a fan of magic. I've been fascinated by magic since I was four when a seven year old girl named Betsy Black in Brentwood, CA got a magic kit for Christmas. In the play cottage in the backyard of her parent's mansion, she showed me every trick in that kit several times. Sorry, you didn't need all those details but I've always wanted to thank her. Thank you Betsy!

Yet for many magic is a dirty word. I was truly bewildered the first time a student said to me that her mom was praying for me because I was studying the tools of the devil. Card tricks...a tool of the devil? Yes. Her mom was really praying for me. On the bus ride home from school that day I made out with this girl. She must have told her mom because she was transferred to another school bus. I'm confident her mom really thought I was a devil child. They're card tricks. Magic is fun. It's like hallucinogens without the drugs.

I see my enjoyment of advertising as an extension of my interest in magic...playing with perception.

Mark's Simpleology is white magic...he is revealing tools and techniques that help unlock our talents.

Want to understand branding? Just do the Simpleology exercises for your company instead of yourself. Presto, you have branding. Some of you are saying, "But, many of the Simpleology exercises are about making me money, and aren't I already doing this?" Yes, and...if you personify your company and think of it as a separate entity you will get different results because your ego and identification will be less entwined.

Branding is about sustaining the focus of your money making construct. Marketing is the legitimate face of magic.

Think Piece

Buckminster Fuller's 1964 definition of a "pattern integrity" is curiously similar to many current definitions of a brand: "Pattern Integrity is when a pattern has integrity independent of the medium by virtue of which you have received the information that it exists." --If we replace the word '*pattern*' with the word '*brand*' we create the statement: "A brand has an integrity independent of the medium by which you have received the information that it exists." A brand has an integrity independent of the product, product name, product logo, advertisements, or any other brand accessory.

Personal favor--For the love of Bucky, please stop employing the word synergy to mean increased profits. R. Buckminster Fuller coined the word synergy. "We need more synergy" is a phrase I have heard too many times. Synergy does not mean increased productivity. **Synergy means that a system has *restructured*.** Restructuring may increase productivity; then again it may not. Freezing water restructures the water molecule, which is great if your goal is stability or cold but counter productive if your goal is fluidity.

The next chapter energizes your pattern integrity. Remember your brand is your relationship with customers and unless you are energizing them to buy, this is all pointless mental gymnastics. Energy. We're harnessing and redirecting energy.

Creativity Credits provided by Harry Vardis

- Brainwriting... Introduced by Horst Geschka in Methods and Organization of Idea Generation
- Bull's Eye...Is usually called "Targeting", created by Gerard Puccio and Blair Miller
- Forced Connections ...Created by Charles S. Whiting and first appeared in Applied Imagination
- Morphological matrix...Created by Dr. Fritz Zwicky
- Divergence rules...Applied Imagination by Alex Osborn
- Convergence rules...Proposed Concept of rules by Scott Isaksen and Don Treffinger in Creative Problem Solving, the Basic Course
- Highlighting... dots and clusters....Was first mentioned by Don Treffinger and Roger Firestien in 1983, and was developed by Multiple Resource Associates
- Evaluation matrix... Sidney Parnes uses it in his Creative Behavior Guidebook and Creative Behavior Workbook

Chapter 13: Feed Their Passions

(“Lesbian Vampire Nun” picture removed)

Sex sells. Lesbian sex-starved vampires with blood may be going too far for your comfort zone. I dig it. Strutting is profitable. Being controversial is appropriate for an underdog challenger brand. Perhaps you shouldn’t go this far, but I suggest you go bigger than you are comfortable. Common is boring. Be extraordinary.

Swagger baby! Put some funk in your words, your packaging and life. I shouldn’t blog or write when I’m angry or feeling unhappy. Why? Because it seeps into my words. Your attitude permeates your communications. Smile. Now, have fun with these energies.

When I worked in advertising, brand managers were often the creatives’ worse enemy. Why? They were too close to their product. Very, very, very, very few buyers care that that the ’99 Galant’s grill is angled differently. This isn’t exciting. This isn’t sexy—except perhaps to people that know cars with such detail that your advertising really isn’t swaying them. Whether you make your own marketing material or somebody else does...let it swagger. Give me some panache.

Love & Sin are extraordinary energies. **Love & Sin are motivators**...we are driven by our passions...leverage passion. Give ‘em your passion. Give them something to talk about. People love to talk.

Dale Carnegie suggests that the easiest way to be fascinating is to be fascinated by whom you are talking with. Letting them talk makes you interesting. Most folks find this tough to do in advertising and packaging...listening to buyer.

How else can we be fascinating? I learned the key to being fascinating from modern persuasion expert Blair Warren. The most powerful sentence I have ever read explains being fascinating more accurately than I have found any place else. The author of this sentence, Blair Warren, has sold this sentence for \$97, and just to make sure his buyers appreciate the sentence he has a twelve-page preface. In fact, I still suggest you go to www.BlairWarren.com and download his now free One-Sentence-Persuasion-Manual because I’m not going to do it justice here...you won’t appreciate this sentence as much as I think every marketer should: “People will do

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anything for those who encourage their dreams, justify their failures, allay their fears, confirm their suspicions and help them throw rocks at their enemies.”

How does this help you be fascinating? Continuously reinforce how you are encouraging their dreams, justifying their failures, allaying their fears, confirming their suspicions or throwing rocks at their enemies. This is how you hold their attention...this is how you are fascinating...this is why they give you their money.

Look at any of your communications...especially a secondary communication like packaging...think of your target...is there a way for this communication to do a better job at:

- Encouraging their dreams,
- Justifying their failures,
- Allaying their fears,
- Confirming their suspicions or
- Throwing rocks at their enemies?

By validating their feelings we are demonstrating that we are listening to them. Not only that, we aren't interrupting them. How do we listen to our customers on our packaging...we reflect their values and sensibilities. Many times this is by shutting up and allowing more blank space. It is always with respect. The deeper we bond with our customer the more they will prefer us to our competition. Having this conversation with your target helps them feel more alive as it makes you more money...in the long run. Your communications will have a deeper resonance with your customers. They will seek you out. You become an energy they crave.

There are many types of stories. The best kind of story a brand manager can overhear ends with somebody saying that they want to buy their service or product. Trying to comprehensively classify stories would be Herculean, if not impossible. Stories are slippery little buggers. They keep changing. Stories are not neatly divisible into mutually exclusive, completely exhaustive rubrics...so, I've focused on legends.

What is a legend? **Legends are larger-than-life stories that are told and retold, have a meaningful connection with an audience and grow stronger as they age.** Legends are stories that have almost achieved mythic proportions. Legends are stable. They are well enough known that if a day goes by and nobody tells their story, the legend still exists. A single legend can have multiple stories, like Paul Bunyan.

A neat thing about a legend is that a single legend may contain contradictory stories. Celebrities are like modern day legends. Stories in the press about a celebrity often contradict one another.

Brand name awareness is less a battle for *truth* than it is a battle for *prominence*. The old adage, “there is no such thing as bad press” is not entirely true. Sales do go down after a high profile negative story about a company. However, it is generally easier to combat a bad story than it is to build awareness from scratch. (In 2005 I was ridiculed on crapauthors.com at the same time a British news site RINF.com bashed my work...the net result? I sold more copies of *Poker Without Cards* than I had with any of my planned publicity.)

Your brand accessories are celebrities. You’re hoping they get exposure, are spoken about on line, are written about in magazines and are featured in movies. And to supplement this exposure, you produce your own media (advertisements) with your product facilitating the heroic act of a customer.

Your customer is your hero. Authentically help them and they will help you.

One of my heroes is Art Reid. Yes, he is a client of mine. More importantly, he’s a friend. I wrote a book about him called *The Art Reid Story*. Art has helped me appreciate the role of the tortoise in the legend of the tortoise and the hare: the focused business person often enjoys greater sustained wealth than the up and down business person. Art reminds me to build on my existing equities. When I find myself facing a big business decision I ask myself, “What would Art Reid do?” And if I’m not choosing what Art Reid would do, I give myself 24 hours before going ahead with my decision. Art Reid is legendary. I’m not the only person who says Art is a solid guy. Few of my clients have I had so many conversations about. Why? Because Art Reid is KNOWN for being a stand-up guy with great resourcefulness. You may not have heard of him...but ask anybody in advertising in Atlanta and I bet they know him or they aren’t from around here.

Your goal might not be to get known around the globe...but you want to be known in your field and to your customers. I read a research report where more than half of Americans didn’t know the name of the company that has their mortgage. This astounds me. A company has partnered with them on a HUGE amount of money and this company hasn’t bothered to introduce themselves in a memorable way.

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Hi. I'm Ben. I'm the author that you're investing this time with. I hope you're discovering ways to apply these ideas to the sustainable growth of your own company. I want you to know that you already get the basics of branding, that by respecting your customer you will intuitively make decisions that will bond them to you. Thank you for your considerations. I'd love to know how I can make this material more actionable.

Sincerely,

Ben

BenMackResearch@gmail.com

Chapter 14: Plan to have Many Conversations

“When an advertisement first appears, a man does not see it; the second time he notices it; the third time he reads it; the fourth he thinks about it; the fifth he speaks to his wife about it; *and the sixth or seventh time he is ready to purchase.*”

-P.T. Barnum

Your loyal customers each went from becoming aware of you and getting enough information to try, all the way through preferring your product or service and being willing to pay a premium to have your product or service...

— *Awareness*

❖ *familiarity*

▪ *overall opinion*

➤ *consideration*

□ *intention*

i. OWNERSHIP

1. Product exploration

a. Product usage

i. Repeat buying

ii. Loyalist...will buy nothing else

A great Direct Response letter takes a stranger from introduction to ownership in a single communication. The bigger the price tag the less likely this is to occur in a single conversation. Advertising is trying to make a sale; branding is about making this sale and the next two sales. If making a deal to a new customer is hurting your relationship with an existing customer...that's not being good to your gander...this tactic might be costing you future sales.

Some business folks think branding means just being warm and fuzzy—I don’t know where they got this misinformation. Some marketers equate the narrative in an ad as wasted space. I beg to differ. The story is part of what makes you likeable, what gets somebody’s attention, what facilitates their ability to dream. Now, should you ask for a sale? Yes. Should you offer an incentive for folks that are just signing up now? Probably. Should you make a current buyer say, “If only I’d waited.” No. Because next time you approach them they will likely hesitate knowing that a better deal is just right around the corner.

Most companies attempt to separate their conversations into two groups: users and prospects...owners and non-owners...Like when you call a company and it asks you for to press 1 for sales and 2 for existing customers and then the wait message has different information...

Prospects

— Awareness

❖ familiarity

▪ overall opinion

➤ consideration

□ intention

i. OWNERSHIP

Users

• OWNERSHIP

○ Product exploration

▪ Product usage

• Repeat buying

• Loyalist...who will buy

nothing else

It feels weird for me to get a “Dear Valued Customer” when I’ve never made a purchase. Worse, I get spam that reads, “Dear , You are a valued customer...” Funny. I don’t feel that valued.

If you are alone with a non-user, then you can offer them whatever you want without current users feeling jealous. Just realize that if they are only buying now because of a steep discount, then this patron is likely to only buy with steep discounts. If you think two sales ahead...is this customer worth the effort? Will you profit enough from them?

It generally takes more than one conversation to make a sale. The neat thing about legends is that a single legend includes a multitude of stories. Structurally, an advertising campaign with more than one story is a You’re learning magic. Prepare yourself for accelerated growth. Buckle up and breathe.

legend. However, part of what makes legends so appealing is that they vary from one telling to the next. I have yet to see this taken into account with mass media. Sometimes I watch niche media and I might see a cool Altoids commercial during each break. It is really cool the first eight times I see it. I might even enjoy the next twenty if there was a modicum of variation: a different expression when the guy falls in the fire, a couple of different lines here or there...anything. Eventually, I just tune it out. Slight variation gives me something to experience.

Buyers. That's what business is about...buyers. We made an offer and somebody not only said yes, they paid and we got the money in our account. For most marketers, their most expensive cost is getting a prospect to buy. Then, the moment that the customer has the product in their hot little hands, they are greeted by the conversation that has the least thought and care that has gone into the whole deal...the packaging. Opening the product is probably the most important moment in the customer's experience and has the greatest impact on their future satisfaction.

A buyer is so wonderful...they're more likely to buy from you in the future than any other target population. It's time to help them appreciate what they have. Sure, a catalogue of other offerings is fine, but your collateral about their current purchase should be all about why they made a fantastic choice and how much they will enjoy this purchase for time to come. Reinforce they've made a great purchase. Point out what's likeable.

Sometimes, I buy a product and the instruction manual is almost incomprehensible, but there is a ton about what else I might buy in the future. That's sort of like screwing a girl and asking her out for next week and she hasn't had an orgasm yet.

Skip the next paragraph if you find seduction discomfiting. Be an adult.

"The truth is, the majority of people are very reasonable. They don't write letters when something offends them on TV. 'Cause reasonable people know that IT'S JUST F*C#ING TELEVISION! And not only that, reasonable people HAVE A LIFE!"

—Bill Hicks

If seduction analogies don't scare you...read *The Game* by Neal Straus, its all about speed seduction...actually, its more than that, but if you are in the business of marketing you are in the persuasion game and you are seducing customers. How do you make somebody want to sleep with you again? You ask them, "You like this? How about this?" and you listen to their responses which aren't always in English. And you give them what they like.

I love hate mail. This is not an invitation. I'm just saying that having an advertisement that made somebody take some action shows that at least some people are reading your messages. If you aren't being bold you're probably invisible.

"Without promotion something terrible happens. Nothing."

--P.T. Barnum

I'm a huge fan of promotions. I also think that the promotion should be an extension of your brand essence, a promotion that reinforces your brand essence. Your story is what wraps the promotion into your brand essence...into the intellectual territory that makes the promotion yours. Your swagger. Your attitude. Your personality. Your brand. Your relationship with your customers and your prospects.

This is about building your relationship. Do you have a friend where every time they call, you know they are asking for something? Asking somebody for something with every breath is not the way to build a long-term friendship. Occasionally, it is nice to have somebody just say *Hi*. Especially if it's a Christmas card or a thank you note.

Dear Reader,

Thank you for reading my book. If there is anything I can help you with, please don't hesitate to email me.

~Ben

Every communication leaves an impression. Branding respects the cumulative value of these impressions. Since most marketing communications are basically ignored, only a germ of an idea may get

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imbedded in our prospects' minds. Realize that it is a very rare germ that grows into a cold. You are exposed to thousands of germs a day. Your defenses keep the colds or other illnesses at bay. Colds come on when germs have built up faster than defenses tear them down. Your brand essence is the DNA of the mental germs you're leaving in peoples' minds after they have touched your communications. But when you actually have somebody's attention...I hope you will ask for the sale!

I am sometimes ridiculed for believing in brands after I say that a brand isn't your logo, it isn't your awareness level, and that a brand isn't even something that has been found to be predictably measured with great accuracy. I do believe in brands.

"More persons, on the whole, are humbugged by believing in nothing, than by believing too much"

--P.T. Barnum

Chapter 15: Everything Communicates

Choosing USPS or FedEx has a different feeling to the recipient.

The medium is [part of] the message. If you are selling environmental products you better be using recycled packaging...I mean you better if you want to win the respect of this new customer.

Ever heard of...

The logo for Hartmann, featuring the word "hartmann" in a bold, lowercase, sans-serif font. A small "TM" trademark symbol is positioned to the upper right of the word.

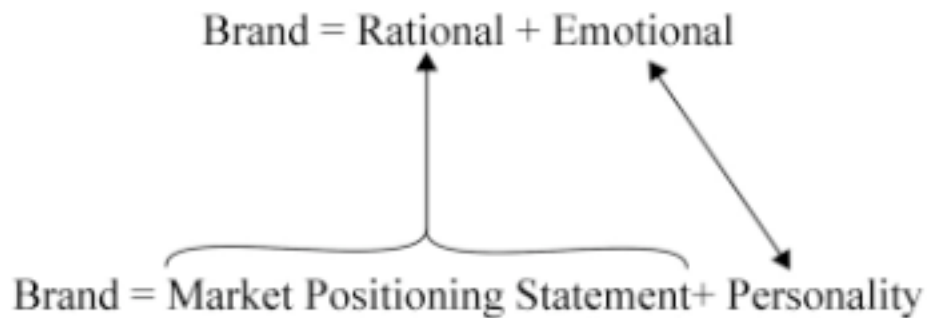
Hartmann is a high-end luggage company that was totally swanky in the 60's and 70's. Here's how we used this technology at TG Madison to win their business and help them make more money.

Hartmann had great heritage, but their loyalists were dying of old age or being wooed away by new entrants to the luxury luggage scene. I'm sorry, to me Tumi is not luxury. Tumi might be a good piece of luggage, but it's hardly *fine*.

Let's talk swagger. Somebody with swagger might carry Tumi, but it isn't Tumi putting the swagger in their step. Hartmann is so fine it helps you swagger.

However, Hartmann sales were not spectacular when I was at T.G. Madison and we pitched Hartmann.

We told Hartmann they needed to get back to basics. Hartmann needed to create a sustainable positioning within the category that leveraged their emotional and rational benefits.



Rational

- Unparalleled Performance
- Superior Craftsmanship
- Constant Innovation
- Beautiful Designs

Emotional

- Reflective of me/Reflective of my aspirations
- Worldly, In-the-know, Substantive & Sexy

If you order a Hartmann catalogue you can see how these ideas are woven into every page...But, we went further.

Hartmann sells about one-eighth of their bags through the mail. The luggage was arriving in a standard cardboard box. Creating a printed box was going to cost too much. However, placing the bag in a faux felt bag inside the cardboard box helped reinforce the special-ness of the luggage of which they were just taking ownership. And we added a thank you note from the president, welcoming the owner to the heritage of Hartmann, the preferred bag of presidents.

We created in-bag collateral. On a showroom floor, many times a prospective owner is showing themselves a bag. Inside the bag we placed collateral to tout the superior craftsmanship. **These rational considerations were always framed in a manner that reinforced a sense of a Cosmopolitan Traveler...Hartmann's brand essence.**

When a shopper is examining a bag... they are somewhere in here:

– *Awareness*

❖ *familiarity*

▪ *overall opinion*

➤ *consideration*

□ *intention*

ii. OWNERSHIP

1. Product exploration

a. Product usage

i. Repeat buying

ii. Loyalist...will buy nothing else

Branding is simple...just look at everything and ask yourself if every touch a consumer has with

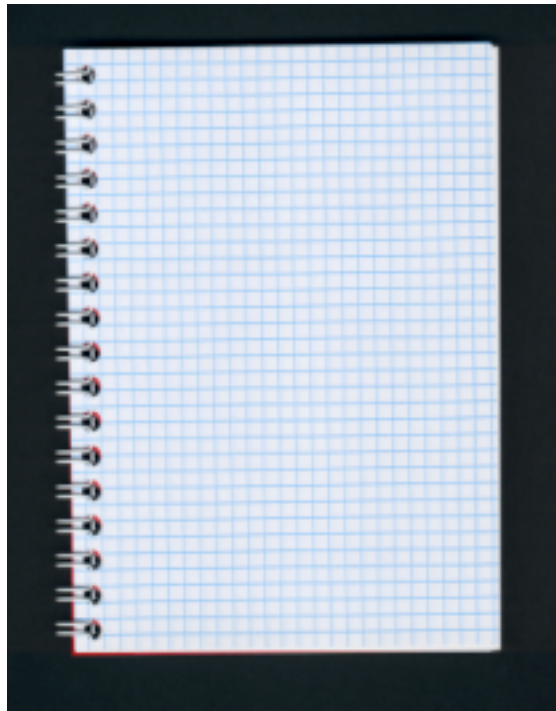
your company or product is reinforcing your brand essence.

Chapter 15 Exercises

1) Take the Path to Loyalty above and next to each phase write what's most important to your customer

2) Look at each element of what you wrote down and see if you can tie this in to your brand essence

3) Now review your communications, which includes your actual product, and see where there's room for improvement



Chapter 16: Storytelling: Letting The Genii Out Of The Bottle

We learn more from stories than we do from other forms of teaching. I have seen data that proves this point for TV, and to a slightly lesser extent for radio, but not for other mediums. I know Direct Response practitioners have similar data. Simply bullet listing attributes and slapping a price on something doesn't sell.

So, if you are in sales, you're in the business of storytelling.

The more the stories leverage human truths, the more likely they are to resonate with your audience. Real situations make suspension of disbelief easier because we can see ourselves in those situations. Find a way to be authentic and tell authentic stories. The stories don't need to have happened to you...but if you're writing the story I bet it won't feel real unless you can imagine the situation happening to you.

Drama is your friend. If I am completely happy...I don't need your product...leave me alone. I don't want to be interrupted when I'm in my bliss.

Fortunately for advertisers, most people aren't walking around in a state of bliss. People may be happy and want more...to feel satiated, but most people aren't happy. What's the most common type of story told? A love story. If you can sell **Love**, authentic love, I suggest you do. Reinforce their love. A marketer of Elvis products asked me, "What is my brand essence?" —easy...*Long Live Elvis*. "Long Live Elvis" is like saying "For people who love Elvis". I see great value in promoting love. Love helps people feel loved and unified and enfranchised and safe.

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But, **most legends aren't love stories.** Most famous legends are warnings of what can go wrong or tales of mavericks. Functionally, fairy tales often act as instructional tales for children that often scared kids away from doing things that might harm themselves, harm their family or endanger their village. Legends for adults are often about a hero who solved problems in cunning ways. For instance, Paul Bunyan, Gulliver and James Bond.

Guess what...you solve a client's problem in a maverick way and they're telling their friends about you, too.

Maverick wisdom sells products. I get why John Carlton positions himself as a maverick marketer...if most of the people in the United States don't think of themselves as happy...then we'll be well served by maverick solutions. Not only does John Carlton provide maverick solutions to his clients, but the sales letters he writes frame the maverick solutions of the products being sold.

But what are these problems of ours? Sure, there are tactical problems like needing to get from A to B, but we just do those things. Our tougher "problems" are getting our emotional needs met.

"When dealing with people, remember you are not dealing with creatures of logic, but with creatures of emotion, creatures bristling with prejudice and motivated by pride and vanity."

- Dale Carnegie

Emotional creatures...Our problems are often unfulfilled passions. Passion sells. What emotion can you tap into? Emotions are labels for human energy. You chime an emotion and you bring forth this energy in your target.

The 7 Deadly sins are a decent source of energy and inspiration...

- **Pride**
 - Bayer Advanced lawn care products sells *pride*...the pride of having a great lawn—most lawn care sell pride
- **Envy**
 - Many products promise to make your neighbors envious of you...this makes you the object of *envy*
- **Gluttony**
 - Romance novels...Consume as much as you want without regrets or repercussions...a number of fake diets claim similar results with food
- **Lust**
 - Lust is so common that prostitutes have lost control of their market and now everybody is selling sex
- **Righteousness**
 - Watch Fox News and feel *righteous*...fair & balanced...we know
- **Greed**
 - Fortune Magazine sells the proper face of *greed*
- **Sloth**
 - Corona sells vacation...many products sell less work, which equals *sloth*

Let's recap...

Your narrative doesn't need to be warm and fuzzy, but you need a story to engage and bond with your customers. Even Wal-Mart has evolved from advertisements that only pound low price to commercials that tell a little bit of story.

The narrative in an effective ad reinforces your basic selling points, whether reinforcing why a person purchased or why a prospect should purchase, these are common reasons to believe your brand essence. The narrative appeals to the non-rational part of your customers. If you didn't need stories you could just send prospects your PowerPoint presentations or put the slides directly on TV. Telling a story might not seem rational, but storytelling has been proven to be a consistently effective means of persuasion.

Furthermore, you should be grateful your customers aren't more rational. You are asking something very irrational of them. You want them to be completely loyal to you while you go out there and seduce other customers. Try this one on your spouse, "Honey, I want to sleep with other people but I want you to be completely faithful to me."

Great copy is engaging.

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I'll read any John Carlton DR letter on golf...I don't even play golf. I just enjoy reading his prose. Call me sick, but I like reading his words. He's a world-class storyteller. Same goes with copywriter Michael Morgan! Michael has fun with his text and I have fun when I read his words. <http://www.outsourcecopy.com>. Since you're reading these words, chances are you read Michael Morgan's sales letter that introduced you to this book.

Being a good brander is about being a good storyteller. However, just like innovation is applied creativity and not purely self-expression, selling is applied storytelling and not simply the traditional three-act structure.

In some ways, copywriting can be seen as a morality play, where the point of the play is to teach a lesson...*Nobody ever got fired for choosing AT&T.*

In other instances, copywriting can be seen as a mystery, where the point of purchasing may be to improve your golf swing, but it is also to find out...*How a one-legged golfer can drive a ball that far.*

For toys, copywriting can be seen as a fantasy, where the point of purchasing is to become part of the fantasy and a license to be absurd...*Feel the force.*

For candy or alcohol, it can be a comedy...*That's brilliant!*

Yesterday, I was in a grocery store and one twelve-year-old boy said to another, "I feel like Skittles." And the second kid made a sheep noise and said, "Stop that jibber jabbing." And they walked around a corner each grabbed a pack of Skittles. Then they started making absurd connections between things, which weren't funny to me, but they were cracking each other up. They weren't saying they were craving the flavors...they were craving the energy they associated with the product from the marketing. Skittles gave them a prop that enabled them to act a certain way. Without these props most folks just won't get that silly.

"I'm not popular enough to be different." –Homer Simpson

The above examples within the types of stories are all from mass advertising campaigns. And they tend to be inoffensive because they are big brands with big bucks and it is a pain-in-the-ass when some tight-ass organization starts attacking them publicly.

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But most brands aren't king-of-the-hill. Most brands are challenger brands. You have to be distinctive. I'm not suggesting you swear...that might not be your personality. If it isn't, I'm grateful you've tolerated my foul language in this text. Sincerely, thank you for putting up with my crap. I went to Fairfax High School in Los Angeles...this is how we talked. I'm attempting to keep it real.

What's funny to me is that it has been the rare CMO or CEO who would be offended if I inadvertently dropped the F-Bomb. Often times C-level players would swear in ways I hadn't heard or thought of before. It was the mid-level brand managers that got all thrown by an occasional cuss word.

Even if you don't swear, being bold and different will get you attacked. You will be attacked, whether by a colleague or a client. I would prefer to be attacked occasionally and make money then to sit against the wall and only talk to other wallflowers.

If you are bold you will attract energy, not all of which will be complimentary. You can handle this. It may be easier to handle with a few random civilians than with colleagues or bosses and superiors. However, if you are helping them make money, I bet you will be forgiven.

I was recently challenged about whether Legendary Branding really created legends. I was at a marketing meeting. I had recently seen this woman in a much more casual setting. I knew she disliked me, though I don't know why. I knew she had waited until this moment to ask a pointed question. She had rehearsed this question and everybody in the room could feel the daggers in her voice. When she asked whether Legendary Branding really created legends, I was jolted by her energy and so was everybody else in the room. I paused before responding. Then, I authentically thanked her for asking me the question.

Why was I authentically grateful? She had created drama. She created an extraordinary situation. This event was likely to be retold...it is difficult to buy that kind of opportunity. I asked if I could perform a magic trick as a reply. She seemed flustered and wanted me to answer her question. I was cool. I enjoyed the mounting energy and focus in the room because I saw this exchange as an opportunity. I performed the invisible deck. I got the entire group to applaud. Afterward, I explained how I made more money than other magicians with better hand-skills. Remember earlier in this book when I told you about the most amazing card trick you would

ever see in your entire life? Somebody seeing that trick then told their friends they had seen “the most amazing card trick they had ever seen in their entire life.” I gave them the framing...I gave them something to talk about. I made it sexy, but, more importantly, I made it easy for them to share this extraordinary experience. As soon as any person told their friend my trick was “the most amazing card trick they had ever seen in their entire life,” it was legendary. A legend is a story that is repeated. The trick is that they have to be given the words to repeat.

If you are hoping to have people talk about you, then you have to give them words they can repeat...a phrase that tumbles out of their mouth. Internet discussions are different because people can cut and paste. But...cut and paste usually looks like cut and paste and not an authentic conversation. To help folks actually speak/type original conversations about your product...give them tools to help them along. This is the most amazing card trick you’ll ever see in your entire life. I don’t care if they parrot back the exact phrase...but if they have trouble repeating the concept you’re not going to get talked about.

Most folks are ***not*** very skilled at describing extraordinary events...let alone being extraordinary without the help of products. You gotta love ‘em. It is rewarding when the kid picks up the Skittles and pretends to be a sheep. I love it when somebody describes my card trick as “the most amazing card trick I have ever seen in my entire life.”

On a grumpy day I’m cynical. These are days I should not be writing copy...either as text or even most emails. My grumpiness permeates my writing despite how hard I try to temper my feelings. I feel smug. I feel like this...

“You gotta bear with me, I’m very tired, very tired of traveling, and very tired of doing comedy, and very tired of staring out at your vacant faces looking back at me, wanting me to fill your empty lives with humor you couldn’t possibly think of yourselves. Good evening.”

--Bill Hicks, patron saint of comedy

I *love* Bill Hicks. And he died broke. He died of cancer that might have been cure-able if he had health insurance and had gone to a doctor much sooner. I thank Bill for providing an example for me. Bitterness doesn’t make money. Bitterness is not attractive energy. Righteousness isn’t attractive. I mentioned *marketing rebel* John Carlton earlier. John Carlton illustrated this point by contrasting the folks who invented NLP to a

famous seminar leader who made millions teaching people these ideas in the '80s. The PhD's who invented it won awards but were bitter. They weren't being flocked to. They could even show how the famous guru was teaching, wrong, but they couldn't understand why folks didn't want to learn from them. I do. Their righteous indignation kept folks away. Righteous indignation is girl repellant. Not sexy. Eventually, the NLP guys all got rich. Anthony Robbins is wealthy.

I've learned to get negativity out of my system before entering a business meeting and before writing emails. Okay, most of it anyway. I'm sorry to drag you down with me in my moments of weakness.

I know how to do church—how to dress up and mind my manners and my language. I worked a gig for Coca Cola a couple weeks ago...not exactly the corporate audience that laughs at synonyms for crap...in the big meetings. But, they dig it over a beer. And we laugh together. I know their pain of having to perform a presentation with an insight that doesn't really work, but the presentation was developed separate from the insight team...and well, the insight is still valuable. I don't blame them for being in that jam. I feel their pain. I've been there. That's why I made up the word Intellishit.

At Big Agencies I've seen creative teams that loathe a target audience. You know what happened...the ads sucked. Of course they did. You gotta love your target and speak to them when you're feeling the love. I don't mean to preach.

Folks can't make up what to say about you. Don't make fun of them for their lack of originality...discover what they can repeat and help them repeat these words.

These are your customers, folks. They're feeding your children.

You gotta love 'em.



Chapter 17: Branding & Thinking Two Products Ahead

Thinking is a verb, requiring action...work. The good thing about this work is that it makes many of your later choices easier and more intuitive.

Science fiction authors Kurt Vonnegut and Philip K. Dick both used recurring characters in various novels. When asked why...each of them said that they already knew those characters so they knew how to write them. That's what you're doing with this work...you're getting to know your public face and developing that character to yield you more money.

Branding is about developing a relationship and enchanting your customer. And sustaining that enchantment through when they are ready to buy again.

Here's a case where that didn't work...I recently bought a copy of *Chemical Wedding*, the 16th century text the Harry Potter series is based on. I had already downloaded the text for free, but I wanted to give the book as a gift to a friend for his birthday. So, I paid \$33 to "Alex" for a leather bound copy of the book. Alex was entrepreneurial enough to have read a post of mine referencing the manuscript. I'll use the name Alex because maybe he has a good product now. I was impressed with the young man's hustle, and I PayPal'ed him the money...I doubt I'll do business with him again. The leather-ette cover feels cheap and the book came late. I emailed him that I was disgruntled. To his credit, he apologized for the product being late, but I still feel burnt and I don't trust him or his company to provide quality products. If the binding was decent...I bet I would have gone to "Alex's" website first when considering gifts for the more esoteric of my friends. But no. I had to scramble and get a last minute gift because his product was late. On top of that, what did arrive I would have been embarrassed to give even if it had arrived on time. Why do that? How much does real leather cost? I found some at Micheal's craft store for \$6. And that would have covered two books. I would have gladly paid \$50 for the book if it had been really cool, on something that looked like aged paper with a hand-stitched leather binding.

If I was selling leather bound copies of *Chemical Wedding*...selling esoteric knowledge...I'd be writing a report on how you can see the tools from *Chemical Wedding* in the Harry Potter series and selling that to

buyers of *Chemical Wedding* and sending DR letters to folks who dug Harry Potter. Then, I might figure out a third product that tied these products together or leveraged the equities of those texts for another text or product of some sort. ***This is thinking two products ahead.*** The work on the previous pages would help steer his products and communications down a familiar path.

Your brand is your relationship with a prospect...



As a side note, a group of women at Clif Bar recognized a need for a nutrition bar for women...not necessarily a sports bar, but a nutrition bar full of vitamins and minerals for women. This isn't exactly "Fuel" to help somebody do something athletic, and it was just for women...so this idea never became a Clif Bar...but instead a Luna Bar by Clif.

If somebody has a good experience...they are open to buying again. Your biggest cost is in getting a buyer...a cost effective way around this is to have a brand, a pre-existing relationship so you can short-cut part of this conversation...

- Awareness
 - ❖ familiarity
 - overall opinion
 - consideration
 - intention

iii. OWNERSHIP

1. Product exploration
 - a. Product usage
 - i. Repeat buying
 - ii. Loyalist...will buy nothing else

They already have an opinion of you...**you're halfway to ownership.**

Imagine a family of complimentary products. Tom's of Maine started with toothpaste and expanded into mouthwash and dental floss. I can see them continuing to expand into biodegradable soap and shampoo. Tom's of Maine sells respect for nature...just about anything that respects nature might be an extension of their brand.

Tom's of Maine started as 100% Natural Toothpaste, but the product platform became Tom's of Maine...Tom's of Maine is about **100% Natural** hygiene products.



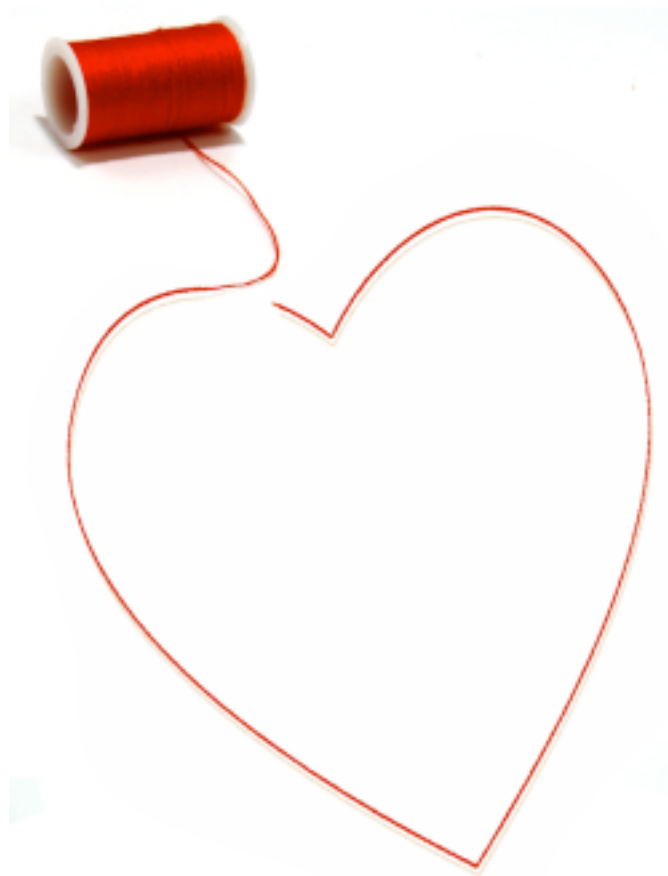
At the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, production had not kept pace with demand. Railroads had connected our great nation, increasing distribution to newfound heights. Goods were produced in one region and shipped to another, either directly or through a central coordinating catalogue company. In the 1880's, Sears, Roebuck and Co., Bloomingdale's, and Montgomery Ward & Co. emerged, profiting from this new capability of distribution. However, the contents of these catalogues were not listed as brands or by manufacturer, but by product and function.

Index of 1887 Sears, Roebucks and Co Catalogue
Note the listing of products as opposed to brands

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Ads in this era touted the function of their product, often with exaggeration. The buyers knew nothing of their manufacturer, except for possibly a name on the box or product. Many of the products ordered didn't really work, or didn't work for long. The catalogues that survived offered guarantees and screened the merchandise they sold. The catalogue's name became a promise of quality. These retailers were the first mass consumer brands. Consumers would prefer to buy one product because it was "from Sears" as opposed to a similar product from Intellishit Marketing.

If you build trust, you have brand equity that will help make your future sale.



THE END

We hope you enjoyed the fireworks. What follows are the ramblings of a scattered account planner. Proceed at your own risk.

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APPENDIX 1

AKS

My Dear Reader,

I'd like to share a sad story...a saga of a company that owned a territory and lost their terrain. This story requires going back several years, to 1946. America is celebrating the end of World War II, pregnant women line the streets and the world is breathing easier that Nazism is squelched. Aside from the women, we see that much of America, is relatively sterile. There aren't many new cars, bed sheets only come in white and there are three flavors of ice cream: chocolate, vanilla and strawberry.



Along comes a guy named Burton who is having fun trying all sorts of different flavors of ice cream. He's even mixing chunks of stuff into ice cream. People dig it. (Okay, that's anachronistic...they didn't use the word "dig" in that way in the '40s.)

Ice cream has always been delicious...suddenly it's fun. Fun is often profitable: people like to have fun...especially when they're out shopping.

Burton's ice cream is fun...demand soars. He can't keep up with demand and teams up with a guy named Irvine to help him with his business. Their business flourishes as consumers are tantalized by the kooky stuff Burton and Irvine are using to flavor ice cream. Their stores are fun and colorful. The walls have brown, cream and pink circles on them. This is a reminder of what they evolved from, the three primary flavors of ice cream: vanilla, chocolate and strawberry.

Sure, Burton and Irvine still had chocolate...they had seven varieties of chocolate ice creams. Who knew ice cream could be this good? As their business formalized and they began opening stores, they put their brand essence as a subtitle to their name: Baskin Robbins, 31 Flavors. Burton Baskin and Irvine Robbins knew

that their success was being generated by their newfound creativity in ice cream flavor selection. Baskin Robbins sales continued to grow until the late sixties. They had several hundred formulas for ice cream, but the store was consistently called Baskin Robbins, 31 Flavors...even when the store had 42 flavors on the front counter.

Baskin Robbins, 31 Flavors stagnated in the '60s. Worse yet, market share and constant dollar analysis have, for the most part, declined ever since, with a mild resurgence in the eighties only to fall again.

In 1998, their advertising campaign came up for review. Part of the review requested that agencies explain why Baskin Robbins had declined in sales, albeit slowly, since the late sixties. Part of the pitch process entails uncovering a brand essence. Some times you can create an ad campaign on a gimmick or a category insight, but it seems like great advertising says that brand X=Y. What did Baskin Robbins stand for? They say 31 flavors on all their signs. Cheryl Greene at Deutsch saw Baskin Robbins as no longer owning FLAVORS, Ben and Jerry's surely owned flavors. We could claim indulgence, but that seemed obtuse and not ownable—Hagendaz has a richer ice cream...a common barometer of indulgence.

Cheryl employed Dr. Slesar to interview Baskin Robbins' patrons, one on one, with deep regressive interviewing. Many patrons associated Baskin Robbins with their youth. Many of them recalled with fondness all the fun they had as a child going to Baskin Robbins. In examining those memories, participants explained that it is was events like going to Baskin Robbins that made their childhoods happy. Bingo. Cheryl heard something she could work with.

Baskin Robbins started to not work in the late sixties, when the Vietnam War broke out. They continued to do poorly during the whole Watergate era. They came back a little when the economy surged with Reagan, but not as strongly as its sector. What Cheryl came up with was a story that illustrated the rise and fall of Baskin Robbins' success. Cheryl told the story of Happiness, the abundance in the post war era and continuance through the sixties when America lost its naïveté. This explained why Baskin Robbins hadn't enjoyed the boom of the Reagan era, because morose and heroin chic was vogue. Then she showed how happiness was an emerging fashion by quantifying the usage of happy and happiness over the previous several years. I wasn't there there, but I heard that the end, they drove down the street to a Baskin Robbins store decked out with their happiness campaign. "Don't worry, be happy" played on a boom box. Deutsch won the new business pitch...Deutsch was the best at answering why Baskin Robbins had declined in sales since the '60s.

Why did I tell you that story? I wanted to explain to you how an account planner or brand strategist can help you justify your failures...I can do that, but it feels so much better when the task is to help you make money.

Why did I frame this story as sad? Because Baskin Robbins owned variety and they lost this terrain. Is this a big deal? Is the difference of hundreds-of-millions of dollars a big deal? What's the difference between variety and happiness? It is the difference between exciting and nostalgic. Other agencies had pitched nostalgia and lost. Part of the reason is that nostalgia is emotionally flat. There is no specific emotional promise in nostalgia. Deutsch said the benefit was happiness. When one of the Baskin Robbins executives asked, "Isn't happiness fleeting?" and Cheryl responded, "That's why ice cream melts."

I got side-tracked, the cost of losing variety, of losing their flavor equity was that they lost their relevance. Variety has an implicit promise of constant reinvention, which is exciting. New fends off staid. New=Contemporary. New flavors also kept them topical as new flavors reflected contemporary issues. When Carter was president, they had a presidential ice cream, a peanut crunch flavor. How hip was that? OK, it was cheesy, but it was topical which is contemporary. At a certain point they stopped doing that sort of stuff. That was the beginning of their flavor equity demise.

Had Baskin Robbins continued to create out-there flavors, there may not have been the marketplace for Ben & Jerry's. Aside from great flavors, Ben & Jerry's borrowed from Baskin Robbins success and named flavors after contemporary icons, flavors like Cherry Garcia and Fish Food. Maybe Baskin Robbins wouldn't You're learning magic. Prepare yourself for accelerated growth. Buckle up and breathe.

have been that liberal, but they could have found other contemporary icons to help them stay topical and feel now.

The challenge of Baskin Robbins=Happiness is that advertising can only carry so much of the weight of happiness. Just because you have new ads and new posters on the wall, these accessories don't substantively change the attitude of the minimally paid coin jockey that fills your cone. Happiness is much harder to fulfill on a store level than variety. Never-the-less, happiness could have been implementable, it just would have meant buy-in from the top of the organization all the way to colleagues on the floor. A beautiful vision not endorsed by the entire team is probably a mirage.

If you shift your brand essence, buy-in will be required from store-level colleagues, directors of all divisions, and the uppermost level of management. Uppermost management buy-in is imperative, without this, you won't be given the liberty or resources to see this vision to fruition. Branding becomes the corporate religion, espousing values and dictating certain action while forbidding others. Branding saturated to this extent exists only when championed and reinforced from the top down.

Are you prepared to garner this kind of consensus? If you are in a large organization, probably not. Nothing personal, but when there are a lot of powerful players, it is often best to have a neutral party navigate around political landmines. They have no history with these players. If they step on somebody's toes, you won't bear the grudge for the rest of your career. This all beside the point if professional group facilitators are really good at what they do, maintain energy and move towards appropriate consensus. Hopefully these discussions get passionate. You are playing with your future, your company's future and both of your financial well being. In moments of tension, just remember that each of you love your brand and this tension is an expression of this common love. I mean that quite literally even though it may sound a bit airy-fairy.

Generally, a brand essence either defines what you are as a company or promises a consumer experience. However, it is possible to have a brand essence that states what you are not as opposed to what you are. In 1984, Apple Computers=Not Corporate. At least that is what their two minute Super Bowl commercial implied.

Marketing is about recreating yourself. Any time somebody comes up with a rule, there are examples that run contrary. I would defend that a brand essence should have an emotional promise.

Amazon.com=Largest. Nothing emotional. Not an emotional ploy for wonder of reading. Nada. Largest is a perfectly valid brand essence. However, largest=variety and implies new, so maybe there is an implicit emotional promise.

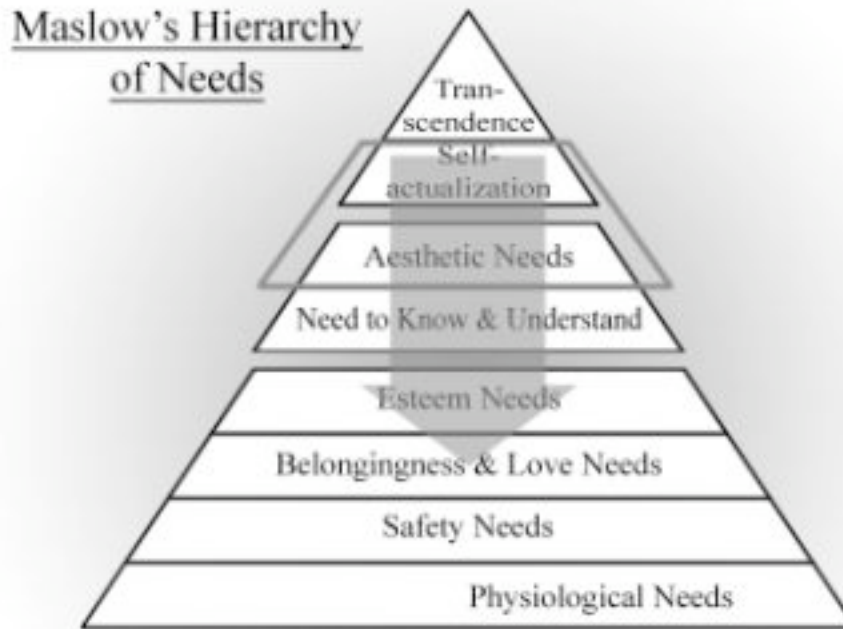
What is a good brand essence? I can't say. It seems that every generalization has many exceptions when you think about it. The category of why you do it tends to be reserved for nonprofits because these brand essences tend to sound like crusades. Some National brands, however, have done well by a crusade like stance. This may only be sustainable until a company reaches a certain size. Laura Ashley started out as tailored clothing at reasonable prices because every professional woman deserves to dress well. When her brand grew to a certain size, it no longer felt like a benevolent act. A Los Angeles ski resort uses a mission statement brand essence with a sense of irony. Mountain High Ski Resort, because you have to ski. Their ads take this idea to an extreme, but it also makes them good guys. They run their snow makers, not so that they can make money before Mother Nature says it is ski season, but because "you gotta ski."

Some would argue that Southwest airlines has done well with Southwest=Low Fares. There is no emotional promise, there is nothing romantic about cheap. Their CEO says that Southwest=Low Fares. Low Fares is an operational directive and not a brand essence. To consumers, their advertising says that Southwest=Freedom. Freedom is the emotional benefit of low fares, because Low Fares means "I can [afford to] go there."

Let's move on. You're doing good reading all this extra credit. This is hard work for many people because we aren't taught to think like this in school.

Whatever Brand Essence you extract(ed), it has to be something that will help you make money. Cingular Wireless' original Brand Essence was Self-Expression. This was not seen as a profitable

positioning...I disagree, but I do know that Self Expression was not a compelling idea in 2002, with America involved in military build-up abroad and at home.



Self-Expression is playing pretty high up on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, **look at the yellow outline above--covering Self-Actualization and Aesthetic Needs**. This brand essence was doable, but the unperformed trick would have been making your message connect with the current zeitgeist—the prevailing popular perception.

Military actions push our zeitgeist down Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs...as illustrated by the green arrow above. Military actions raise the stakes of life. Consumers have a heightened interest in Safety & Belonging.

Marlboro rides through huge swings in public perceptions. The video *The Pitch, Poker & The Public* shows Jay Levinson explaining how The Marlboro Man took two years to catch on...but, we need to make money today. We need to drive retail sales today!

Brand Essence & Retailing

Thinking of your general Brand Essence...I want you to get real tactical and fill out this Marketing Positioning Statement:

Market Positioning Statement

“To (primary target audience),
BRAND is the one (competitive set)
 that (meaningful point of difference).”

Think of a specific communication...

- 1) Who are we selling to?
- 2) What's our competition?
- 3) Why will our consumer care?

The “meaningful point of difference” should be an expression of your brand essence. Why your target consumers will care should be an expression of your brand's essence. The Marketing Positioning Statement will help you focus your ideas. Your Marketing Positioning Statement may change frequently, framing any number of specific conversations from an advertising campaign to your product's packaging.

The marketing positioning statement is the framework for your seduction. You are leveraging your strongest equity and framing this distinction so that a group of people will care tremendously about this distinction. A Marketing Positioning Statement is the practical manifestation of a brand's essence.

After you write a Marketing Positioning Statement...ask yourself:

Does this Marketing Positioning Statement reinforce a sense of my Brand Essence ?

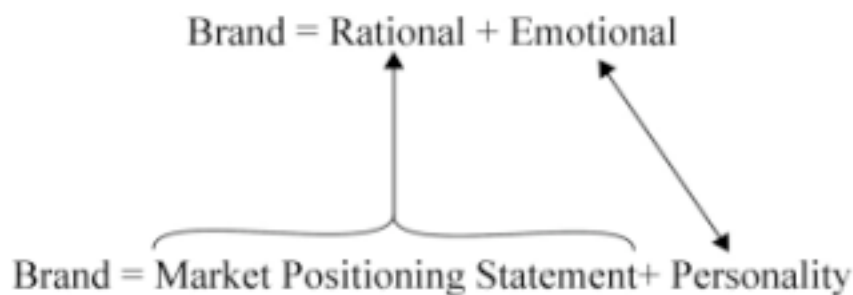
If you find yourself fudging your brand essence...reconsider your brand essence.

For years, Diet Coke has outsold Diet Pepsi. One can argue that Coke had a stronger bonding with an audience than Pepsi, and the disparity of Diet Coke sales to Diet Pepsi sales would support that extension. Diet Coke has stood for “great taste” while Diet Pepsi has stood for “One Calorie.” Which is more important to you as a diet soda drinker?

Remember the KiiC example I gave earlier? If the explicit target was teens then the name KiiC and the draft collateral would have been spot on! Their marketing positioning statement worked against teens, however, KiiC did NOT work against their larger target audience.

Before marketing communications are conceived, the brand essence is adapted into a Marketing Positioning Statement. Concepted...that word struck my buddy Dave Navarro as odd...but that's the word often used in creative departments. I've heard it said and that's what gets done... a concept is created. It is concepted. Usually, several different concepts are sketched, often scores of concepts...this phase is called concepting. Before you concept, it is helpful to have the brand essence worked into a Marketing Positioning Statement.

The more you are able to consistently use language and images the more familiar your communications will feel.



Your rational for believing your brand essence may likely change with your target audience or specific product. Your personality should be predictable and familiar.

Mitsubishi Case Study

A different example: In 1999, Deutsch advertising had won some of Mitsubishi's regional advertising business based on the brand essence of Mitsubishi automobiles=Vitality. Deutsch created ads where a bunch of guys were working out in a gym and a page announces, “The owner of a tan mini-van, you left your lights on.” Those working out are scanning the room to see what wimp drives the mini-van. Mitsubishi of North America chose to run these regional ads nationally instead of ads proposed by G2, their incumbent agency. G2 had been building their ads around the essence of “distinctive,” challenging luxurious cars. I was watching *The Simpson's* You're learning magic. Prepare yourself for accelerated growth. Buckle up and breathe.

that week and saw Homer say, “I’m not popular enough to be different. In the pitch against G2, a picture of Homer saying this line appeared on Deutsch’s leave behind presentation.

While the brand essence of vitality has remained constant, Deutsch expressed this in different faces against different targets.

Mitsubishi automobiles=Vitality

To **aging** single **males**,
Mitsubishi is the one automobile
That won’t make you older than you are.

To **young** singles,
Mitsubishi is the one automobile
That reflects your rhythm.

On the left is where Deutsch started; on the right is where they evolved to, fully owning a youthful positioning. At the time Volkswagen had been airing some hip ads revolving around music. But Volkswagen also ran ads where parents feel young. Volkswagen was trying to straddle youthful and family audiences. They lost. Eric Hirschberg, Deutsch LA’s creative director, out executed Volkswagen and maybe more importantly messaged unwaveringly to youth or the youthful side in all of us. Hirschberg helped Mitsubishi take ownership of the segment that enjoys celebrating young energy.

How did Deutsch land on Mitsubishi automobiles=Vitality? I can’t say. It isn’t that I am bound to silence. Choosing a brand essence is as much art as it is due diligence. From having been there, Ben knows that Vitality came as an answer to the question, “Where can we be?” Owning Vitality seemed to have the broadest, deepest appeal.

This appendix details the data and kinds of insights that you may consider when extracting your brand essence. A traditional way to begin synthesis is a SWOT analysis, aggregating all relevant ideas into four basic buckets:



Obviously, if you do this exercises with modicum of diligence, your list will far exceed the space available on a single sheet of paper. It will probably take several sheets of paper for each rubric: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Strengths.

Part of what helps generate lists of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats is having a long list of considerations. The list of considerations I include in this chapter is downloadable at www.ThinkTwoProductsAhead.com. Downloading these considerations may be helpful when you are brainstorming alone or with colleagues on these topics.

Start with the end in mind and work backwards. First look at some of the outcomes of synthesis, then look at specific considerations. When you are done with synthesizing all your data, you should be able to identify:

- Emotional drivers of core constituents of where we want to be
- Emotional drivers of current core constituents
- Emotional impact on patrons
- Perceived implication of being a patron
- Equities and liabilities of imagistic landscape such as logo and design
- Perceived equities and liabilities of product
- Perceived future role of category
- Possible avenues to strengthen your current image

Your brand essence should be large enough to be thoroughly satisfying to the larger target to whom you hope to appeal. Interspersed between sections of this list are some of the details and considerations that lead Deutsch to land on Vitality.

Brand analysis:

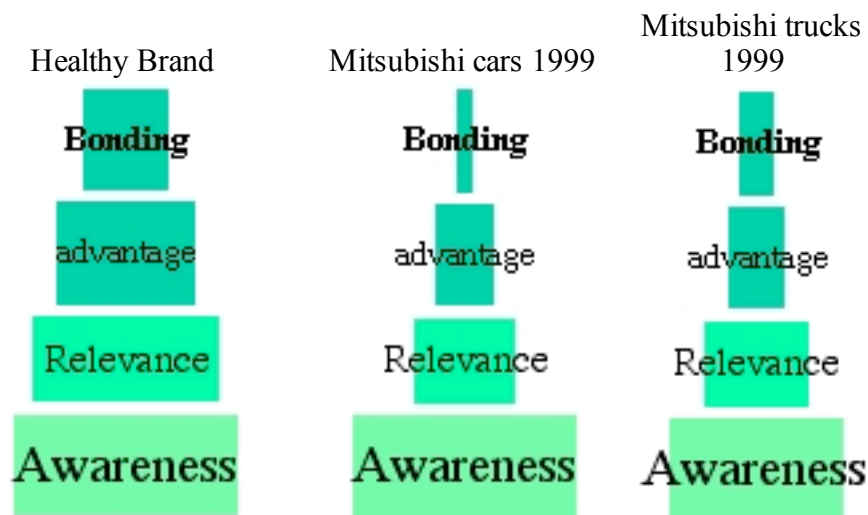
- Awareness: our brand vs. competitive landscape
- Bonding: our brand vs. competitive landscape
- Brand heritage
- Brand associations: our brand vs. competitive landscape
- Possible larger spaces for brand to live
- Needs for brand extensions
- Identification of brand extension outliers

Mitsubishi had high total awareness, but so did every established car manufacturer. The weakness of our awareness was evident when consumers were asked,

“When you think of brands of cars, who do you think of first?”

Rarely would consumers say Mitsubishi or any of its sub-brands. This is called top-of-mind awareness. Furthermore, when interviews would probe along the lines of what other cars came to mind, Mitsubishi and its line of cars were mentioned far less often than most other major car manufacturers.

A lack of bonding was evident as Mitsubishi owners were seen to be less likely to cite their own car than owners of other types of cars, when asked what car they think of first. Bonding is one of those esoteric things that different research companies have different ways of quantifying. The graphic representation is usually in the shape of a pyramid. The base is how many people are familiar with your brand. The next level is relevance. You may be familiar with Aames Home Loan, but if you don't own a home or plan to in the immediate future, the brand has no relevance to your needs. The next level is advantage. Do consumers see an advantage or purpose in your brand for themselves. At the top is bonding, the number of consumers that plan on shopping your brand. Mitsubishi's pyramid got too skinny too quickly.



Mitsubishi pickup-trucks had a much healthier pyramid, but we were charged with increasing car sales. One strategy could have been to tell Mitsubishi that they weren't a car manufacturer. That wasn't the answer they were looking for. There wasn't much appealing within Mitsubishi's heritage. They had recently been sued for environmental misgivings and sexual discrimination. If you looked back far enough, you could see that the company arose from an aircraft manufacturing company that made the planes that killed thousands of Americans at Pearl Harbor, hardly the fodder for endearment.

When a brand is healthy, looking for a larger imagistic space is a carefully plodded job. Mitsubishi was losing money quickly. They needed a space, any space to give them some sales so they could catch their breath.

Target analysis

- Current target
- Competitive targets
- Possible alternative targets
- Relevance/contemporariness to current target/alternative targets: logos, fonts, colors, jingles, slogans/taglines, brand names and other symbols
- Unmet needs of target/ alternative targets
- Current consumer trends

Purchasers of new Mitsubishi cars had appreciated the cars' style. A secondary comment was that these buyers liked a car that not everybody else has. We speculated that the combination of these two reported perceptions had led G2 to their distinctive positioning.

At Deutsch, we gave less credence to the second point of buyers "preferring" a car that not everybody else has. Experience suggested that few people actually enjoy owning a large ticket item that isn't popular. The vast majority of these buyers had bought a Mitsubishi while they were actually shopping for other cars. These buyers had been test-driving cars on their consideration-list and stumbled across a deal or financing for Mitsubishi that lured they couldn't find any place else. We drew an "insight" from this fact, that Mitsubishi buyers were stretching financially to make their purchase. These were buyers who could more easily afford less expensive cars, but these less expensive cars felt staid when they were test driven. Buying a Mitsubishi might be extending themselves, but they were getting the class of car that made them feel good. **To these buyers, the type of car they were buying was aspirational, we just needed to validate their choice. Creating Mitsubishi to stand for vitality helped make that choice even easier.** Can you see how this choice is not as easy if Mitsubishi stands for distinctive? Distinctive has overtures of staid, albeit classy staid, it is still low testosterone.

Product analysis:

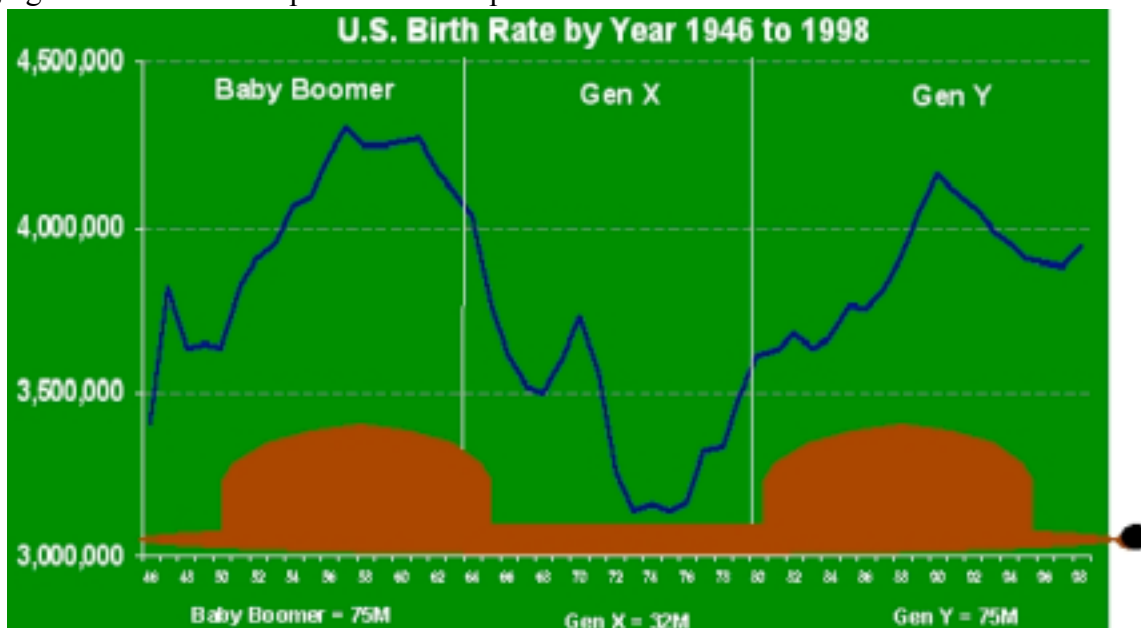
You're learning magic. Prepare yourself for accelerated growth. Buckle up and breathe.

- Pricing: our brand vs. competitive landscape
- Perceived quality: our brand vs. competitive landscape
- Perceived value: our brand vs. competitive landscape
- Points of parity with competition
- Strengths: our brand vs. competitive landscape

Mitsubishi didn't have a mini-van. We were the only major manufacturer without a mini-van and mini-vans had already crested in their popularity and were emblematic of family and everything non-virile. Our first ads harangued mini-van owners.

Messaging analysis:

- Assessment of equities: logos, fonts, colors, jingles, slogans/taglines, brand names and other symbols
- Messaging: our brand vs. competitive landscape
- Packaging: our brand vs. competitive landscape



Appendix-9

Another piece of data we were looking at was the pig in the python metaphor. If you graph the general population by age, it used to look like a python that swallowed a pig. Baby Boomers create the hump. However, this metaphor is dated because the Baby Boomers had kids of their own. This generation is often called the Echo Boom generation or Gen Y. Whichever label you prefer, these youngsters are a second blip and are represented by the second hump. In 1998, there was no Ford Focus, no new VW nobody was speaking to the emerging youth market. Vitality was perceived as having strengths against this emerging target.

Operational analysis

- Possible alternative methods of distribution
- Possible alternative packaging
- Possible alternative pricing

Mitsubishi had its own financing. This had more of an impact on amplification than it did on generating a brand essence. In amplification we'll discuss how this was valuable.

You aren't delving into these areas of consideration for due diligence. You are exploring these topics because it may be relevant for extracting your brand essence. And **your brand essence needs to be something that will help you make more money.**

That's a lot of work I just set out for you to do... You don't have to do it all... I'm just laying out the kind of prep that goes into a Brand Strategy Offsite. Please allow me to simplify this process for you... Enough about you. How about me...

After having been disillusioned with Big Agency advertising, and not wanting to return to the hustle of a creative boutique... I ventured back out into freelancing... but with a much stronger focus on my writing, my fiction writing. I still freelanced in marketing, but I had to take a shot at becoming a famous novelist.



The Bucky Challenge

I will pay you \$23 if you don't see The Matrix for 30 days--Offer ONLY valid until 10/23/05.

Here's the deal... If you read **Poker Without Cards** from beginning to end and don't see **The Matrix** for 30 days, I will mail you \$23. This is not a gag. There isn't an image of "The Matrix" in my book. I do reference the movie twice, but that's not this deal. The only trick is that by "The Matrix" I'm not talking about the movie *The Matrix*...

—I'm talking about seeing **THE MATRIX**, seeing a new **REALITY**. Usually this secret knowledge is abused to start cults or control the masses, but I explain how it works. If reading *Poker Without Cards* doesn't fundamentally alter the way you see the world I'll pay you \$23 for wasting your time.

Do you want to break free from mass persuasion? I have the credentials to teach you how:

- A) **Magician**—Magic Castle award winning magician; graduate of The Academy of Magical Arts' Junior Society, a real Hogwarts where Dai Vernon, David Copperfield & Lorenzo Clark tutored us kids
- B) **Ad Executive**—Senior Vice President, Director of Brand Strategy for two large agencies
- C) **Realist**—Tutored by Buckminster Fuller, Howard Bloom, Mike Cane, Jay Levinson & Dr. Hyatt
- D) **Hustler/Salesman**—e.g., I sold over \$22k of pizza in 3 days at Bonnaroo Music & Art Festival '05

I suck at designing my own ad. Email from friend: "ben: i sayeth this unto you: get thee to an art director, my head almost exploded with the *dizzeing* array of font sizes and colors." I'm sorry this ad isn't better. I wasn't the guy that got paid to make the doughnuts at ad agencies. But this main message is so simple I'm making this ad... If you read *Poker Without Cards* and you think that I owe you \$23 I'm sending it to you, one question asked. **If you can say "yes" I will pay you \$23.**

I ask one question: Did poker without cards not work for you? You write me, "Yes, Poker without Cards didn't work for me and I read every word on every page." And I send you \$23. All you have to do is mail me a Self-Addressed-Stamped-Envelope and I will send you a money order for \$23. Please don't be an asshole. Don't just send me a SASE without having read my book.

Clearly Channeling just for profits SUCKS.

I trust you. I trust you don't come to me with the intention of scamming me. Please don't scam me. You're a decent person. You read *Arthur Magazine*—I'm a struggling author pulling a stunt I hope you talk about—more than that **I want you to read my book.**

It's as easy as 1, 2, 3.

- 1) You read the book—You see **THE MATRIX** and feel satisfied and tell a friend, or:
- 2) You send me an email (email: addy@book-matrix.com; PokerWithoutCards.com) telling me you've finished the book and your not seeing **THE MATRIX**, your not seeing it
- 3) 30 days later you send me a SASE and I send you a money order for \$23

Can't afford the book? **About 200,000 were downloaded for free**—ask them. But, I'm running out of cigarettes. So, now a download is \$3.23. Read it by 9/23 and if it doesn't work for you I will send you \$23. **THIS IS A DIFFICULT BOOK.** I transcribed the most powerful conversation I ever heard and put it in this book. To make the ideas more accessible, I added a glossary. I have done everything I know how to make these ideas as simple as possible and it is still a difficult book. If the word *esoteric* scares you please don't take my challenge. If the *The Da Vinci Code* is a thriller, *Poker Without Cards* is a consciousness thriller. **Buy local and keep *Poker Without Cards* from the independent store that gives you *Arthur Magazine*!**

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Benjamin Jacob Benjamin Mack
Gorythello dyal mack@poker-cards.com
Ben Mack

p.s. Thank you **STICK AND MOVE** for buying me this space! Reader, Please know they didn't write this clunky ugly ad. They make really good ads. Really. Two ex-Crispin creatives, of course they do! p.p.s. Special Thanks to Michael Money and b. e. hydromako of **RENF.com** for my first online feature article. Order my book and you will sleep better tonight, guaranteed! Now, PokerWithoutCards.com

My 1st book



"As a result of this book, Ben will never work in advertising again. If you read it, neither will you. May this clever virus infect the mediaspace before it's too late."

Douglas Rushkoff

Criticism/Cyberia/Media Virus
Arthur Magazine Columnist

"Ben Mack. Since you don't have the guts to be a homosexual, I'm glad that you are pissing off your parents by writing."

Kurt Vonnegut Jr.

Cat's Cradle/You should know other titles

"*Poker Without Cards* is a consciousness thriller, combining natural philosophy with storytelling—the effect is like taking a B, only you never come down."

Robert Anton Wilson

Two Thomases (1969)/1969/1969/1969/1969

"There are ideas in *Poker Without Cards* corporations don't want you to read... Read this book!"

Michael Romano

The Yes Men

"Most smart people realize that there is more going on than meets the eye. *Poker Without Cards* can help those people figure out why, and possibly more importantly, how to turn that into a benefit for themselves."

James Curdo (www.jamescurdo.net)

Creative Director, author of *"Joss My Cunt!"*

"*Poker Without Cards* pulls the circus tent back on persuasion and marketing. If you ever wanted to meet The Great Oz, read this book. Reads like a modern-day 1984...the world has found a new Orwell"

Mark Joyner

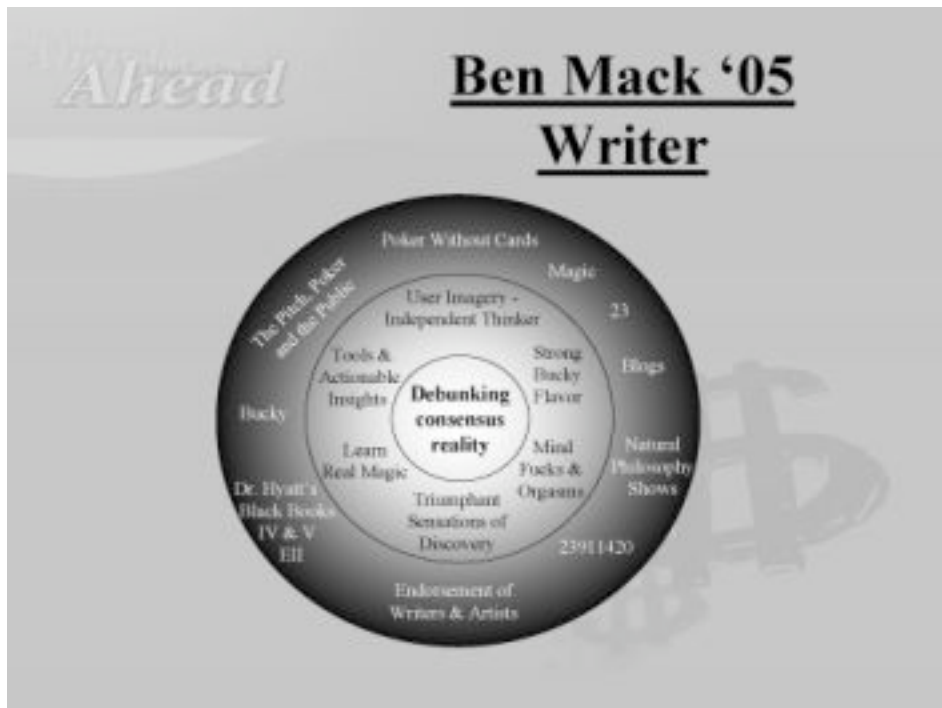
Mark Joyner Marketing

"If you mix George Orwell, Noam Chomsky, and Larry Bernstein you'd read a voice like Ben Mack."

Michael Money

Renf.com Underground Garage

In 2005 I tried selling righteousness in the form of a consciousness thriller. Consensus reality is wrong...here's Truth. *TRUTH* is a tough sell unless you're willing to be a religious leader or at least a guru. And societies eventually reject their gurus. I like money more than I like being right. I garnered a lot of attention but I didn't make any money on the book. Have you Googled me? You'll find a lot of links...I created an online splash with a book called *Poker Without Cards*. Here's the Mack '05 Legend Platform I worked from...



How is my reader the hero? Because my readers have mental breakthroughs most people don't have.

Last year I focused on promoting my first novel...Now, I'm focusing on freelancing, lecturing and writing. Some of my associations weren't productive. My public connection to 23rdians made some people see me as a wingnut. So, I've distanced myself from those forums, even though I still read a lot of that literature. I love wingnuts...happy successful wingnuts.



But, as you look at my revised Legend Platform...you'll see the same brand essence and many similar product benefits.

Evolve your props, or your brand promise

not your brand essence, if possible

Dear Reader,

I am sincerely grateful for the time you have spent with my words. If you have found value here and wish to share this value with your friends...my name is Ben Mack. Let me ask for the sale. If you found value here, please tell your friends. Please tell me about it so I can tell my friends.

If you could document the changes you make based on this material and track changes in sales it will also help me paint a Fuller picture for future prospects. Thank you for your considerations.

I am a magician. I've been interested in performing magic since I was four-years-old. My essence hasn't changed...I'm still debunking reality, but instead levitating a ball on stage, I show people magic tricks of the mind. My goal has always been to show business folks how looking at something differently can be profitable.

Thank you in advance for sharing your story of this text.

With gracious gratitude,

Ben Mack

P.S. Here's a quote I admire: "We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit." --Aristotle

P.P.S. The most appropriate and famous last words I could find: "How were the receipts today at Madison Square Garden?" --PT Barnum He said those words and died.

P.P.P.S. The best last words I've ever heard was from my friend Susan Carter's aunt who said, "I'd like to be someplace better." And she closed her eyes forever. She plan that?

P.P.P.P.S. Would you like to see the most amazing card trick you'll ever see in your entire life? Hire me for a presentation. BenMackResearch@gmail.com I do magic.



APPENDIX 2**Jeff Lloyd's Secret to Commercial Residential Real Estate Sales**

Dear Reader,

You're still reading...hmmm. Okay, time to get to the marrow of making money. I warned you that you read the appendix at your own risk. What follows is not for the squeamish. However, if you are interested in how 14-year-old runaway became a 100-millionaire and what he is generous enough to share with me, then keep reading. But first, allow me to introduce Jeff Lloyd of Horizon Realty in West Hollywood, CA. If you give him a call tell him I sent you. Thank you for your considerations...

I met Jeff Lloyd sitting across from me at a 7-card-stud table at Commerce Casino in Los Angeles, California. I was arguably a rising star in consumer research and Jeff was struggling financially, having trouble scraping together alimony and owning zero real estate. Ten years later, Jeff owns over 40 commercial residential buildings outright. If I include his various partnerships, where he owns more than 25%, over 100 buildings.

Jeff is not the richest man in Los Angeles, obviously. He is surely not even the wealthiest man on his block. So, why is he remarkable? He's Jeff Lloyd. Is that a copout? Yes. But, it's also true.

Jeff is a prodigal Heratio Algiers story, orphan turned millionaire. True to form, if you want to see him get angry, show him that you feel sorry for him. If you want to see him get really angry, try disrespecting a stripper. But, I suggest you be prepared to fight. Seriously. Jeff has been successfully working on his anger management, but interacting with a volatile soul can be dangerous to your health, a lesson Jeff's brother Joby helped teach me.

Barring Buckminster Fuller and possibly Charles Munger, Jeff Lloyd is the smartest man with whom I have had the privileged of extended conversations. Jeff is autodidactic, having taught himself what the streets and mentors didn't teach him. His perspectives are shaped more from experience and internal judgment than from external forces or schools of thought. Jeff has made his own money and is beholden to none. To these ends, more than anyone I have otherwise known, Jeff is his own man.

Jeff is a pirate of exquisite mind, a philanthropist and a loving father.



I've been tempted to exploit pirate imagery and associated homonyms. For instance, it is easy for my mind to link sails and sales because both are instruments that harness energy. I have chosen to spare you. More accurately, I have chosen to spare myself the ridicule employing such imagery would warrant.

Pirates of yester year had comprehensive skills, knowledge required to live outside the system. The only laws that could, and did, rule them were natural laws. Pirates battled with one another to see who was going to control the vast sea routes and, eventually, the world. The wider and more long-distanced their anticipatory strategy, the more successful they usually were. Their battles took place out of sight of land dwellers and the keepers of written history. The losers generally went to the bottom of the sea. Those who stayed on top of the waters, and prospered, did so because of their comprehensive abilities.

Salesmen can be seen as corporate pirates. They live outside the normal rules of companies, they create their own structure and they are rewarded in direct proportion to their comprehensive abilities. But, corporate salesmen are more like privateers, sanctioned to find bounty along specific sea routes given a modicum of support from a larger organization.

Jeff Lloyd is a real pirate, making money however he can, taking personal responsibility to the sailors he has taken about his ship. His strongest defense is his greatest asset, an exquisite mind. But, be warned, this book swims in shark-infested waters. We speak pirate here, not "Arrr" or whatever garbly-gook you've seen in movies, but with words like shit and fuck and the vernacular of the street and The Street. I've been a Senior Vice President for two large ad agencies, I've hung with some C-level players of Fortune 1,000 companies, they say *fuck* a lot. Not many business books use the word fuck. How real is that?

Jeff Lloyd is a philanthropist. Yes, his company is a corporate sponsor of The Covenant House, but that donation was a mixture of love and spite. He has deep love and empathy for homeless teenagers, but a major force in his donation was to show local business folks that if somebody like him can afford to pony-up, so should they. Giving money in this way doesn't make somebody a philanthropist. Consistently, I see Jeff teaching others how to pull themselves up by their bootstraps. He's willing to be financially burned or personally disappointed repeatedly, once, by any given person. He doesn't care. Jeff knows that some folks will make use of what he can offer and that possibility lights him up. I hold that this makes him a philanthropist.

When I told Jeff about my work with Jay Levinson, how Jay teaches small business owners to harness the marketing techniques of big business advertising, his eyes lit up. That conversation led to this book, he wanted to teach others what he has learned about selling. He has a brokerage where he teaches his agents how to sell, but that isn't fulfilling to him. From what I've seen, most of them are lazy. It is hard to stay motivated when a half-ass effort is netting 200k a year. That's why Jeff suggests choosing a wife that inspires you to make more money.

That is Jeff Lloyd's first tip: *Choose a wife that will inspire you to make money.*

I would be remiss if I ignored the role of Jeff's ego in commissioning me to write biography, a project that has stalled. I fit Jeff's criteria of a man with a dream and I have never screwed him. But, what really lit him up was the opportunity to have his tale well told. I hope I hold up my end of this deal, and if his biography comes to pass I hope this allows a few people to glimpse at his grandeur and the means to his success. Jeff thinks he has led an extraordinary life. I hold this as undeniable. Jeff's ego is not to be discounted. He is a brave man for allowing me to write candidly about my observations.

There are many elements of this book that a critic can use as fodder for ridicule. I explained to Jeff that this part of Think Two Products Ahead, his story, might be described as ridiculous, literally worthy of ridicule. Jeff replied: "That's the price of being extraordinary, many people describe me as ridiculous."

Jeff is a loving father. I hold that Jeff is a good father. Jeff beat the shit out of his oldest son Brandon and says that if he were in a similar position, he would do it again. Having been raised by a pacifist father, a man that only spanked me once when I tried to hit my sister with a rake when I was four, listening to Jeff speak about parenting I was confronted with a parenting style that I had never considered. I found that once I got over my shock and prejudices I saw warmth and effectiveness. I'm still judgmental. I think beating your son to the point of needing emergency care is excessive, bordering on wrong. However, if I was forced to say good dad or bad dad, I say Jeff is a good dad and Brandon aggress.

Traveling with Jeff was mind expanding. I was repeatedly discomfited or pleased in unexpected ways. I was often disoriented, not just from drinking, but from confronting my own values—from abandoning pride as Jeff bought me my first hooker to feeling extraordinarily vulnerable as Jeff's friend insinuated I could have some portion of \$120,000 cash if I would give this friend a blowjob, something I had never done before, given a guy head. Traveling with Jeff in Mexico, I got bloodied, I bought cocaine from a Tijuana cop and I got my girl back. My ego is huge and I hope to temper my inclination to steal the spotlight. What follows is a brief encapsulation of lessons I learned while recording Jeff's life story. If we do complete his biography, you'll be horrified, captivated, impressed and relieved to know things have worked out fairly well for this gentleman.

The lesson you are about to read is written from interviews that occurred on two road trips in 2005 that both originated from Los Angeles. One trip to Nowhere, Arizona to see if Jeff wanted to evict a past due tenant and the other to Ensenada, Mexico where Jeff was racing in The Baja 500. I'm not a fan of off-road racing.

During our conversation Jeff was concerned about if his story would be appealing. I assured him it was. Everybody is fascinated by money. The fastest growing sport on ESPN is poker—you get rid of those cumbersome balls and vast open fields and you just televise people competing for money. Even if you aren't interested in Nicole Kidman inviting Jeff up to her hotel room and then kicking him out, at least you might pick up a trick or two about making *more* money.

I intersperse Jeff Lloyd's quotes with my commentary. I hope you dig this. I'm calling this essay...

GET THE SHIT OUT

JEFF: I'm a salesman, sales people make more money than anybody. Isn't that the case?

I disagree with Jeff. Billionaires make more money than anybody else. But, next to those that are already independently wealthy, salesmen make more money than anybody else. Jeff didn't hear me say this. When the type is not italicized, it's me commenting. When I've transcribed Jeff's and my conversation, it looks like this:

BEN: There's a lot of people out there that pride themselves on working really hard and don't have much to show for it.

JEFF: Yeah, that's true. Well I guess I'm lucky then. (laughs) Right?

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BEN : Well I think you also chose something where you can make larger amounts of money and stuff like that.

JEFF : Yeah you always avoided coming over to the company even though I've asked you a bunch of times...Nobody in my office makes less than 100 grand a year. And let me tell you, they're not that bright and they're not dedicated. I can tell you exactly how to make, a quarter mil a year.

Jeff's path to making \$250,000 involves selling real estate. Obviously, you need a real estate license. You also have to have a desire to make a lot of money. But, that covered in the next chapter on choosing a wife. Jeff makes the point that salesmen make the most money, but he's not speaking about all salesmen. The guy at Sears selling Hoovers isn't making very much. Salesmen selling big-ticket items make the most amount of money. Few things cost more than developed real estate. The trick is not just selling real estate, but selling expensive real estate.

JEFF: I saw that it took as much to sell a house as it did to sell a four-unit apartment building...but I was wrong. It often takes more time and energy to sell a small house than it does to sell commercial [residential] because a small buyer is scared of any substantial transaction because either they haven't done it before or because it means so much more to them...also, you want to sell businesses instead of homes...commercial residential may be where people live, but the buyers are buying a business. When somebody buys their own home they move slowly, when somebody buys an income stream they generally move faster, especially after they have done this four or five times.

Velocity and commission. Allow me to elaborate, it's all-around more efficient to sell big-ticket items. Here's why...if you make six percent commission on a transaction, not only does it take eight \$250,000 home sales to equal one two-million dollar commercial residential sales, but the residential sale may take longer and require more hand-holding of the buyer. I challenged this notion. I asked about our friend Danny Scott, a legendary car salesman. Danny nets over \$350,000 year working the desk of a car dealership in Southern California.

JEFF : If Danny worked for me he'd be netting over a million in less than two-years. Danny knows how to sell, but he's wasting his skills nickel-and-diming folks over a thousand dollars here and there...He's in a place where the customers come to him and so his skills are maximized in terms of quantity [of transactions]. But, if he splits a \$10,000,000 commission he's made three-hundred-grand. Danny could do that.

Confidence. It's all about the confidence. Jeff has a confidence that appears unshakeable. It is unshakeable. I've seen Jeff explode in anger, but I've never seen Jeff loose his stride. Jeff explained to me that he avoids things that make his sphincter squeeze up. He said that simply noticing this is a key to sustainable confidence and increased effectiveness. You can't have confidence and be full of shit.

JEFF : I never cared about having a good car. It didn't make any difference to me. Up until 1996 I was driving a Ford Probe and before that I drove Toyota's, I had a Toyota 4-Runner some Celica's, ya know I mean, in reality, kids cars, but I didn't see it that way. Ya know I didn't care, because I liked the fact it was eight thousand bucks for the Probe or the fifteen thousand for the 4-Runner. No money at all really when you get down to the scheme of things for somebody making hundreds of thousands of dollars. But I remember I went to a client's house and uh, a good client of mine, made no difference what car I was driving, they were doing the deal with me. But they walked out with me and um, and they see my Ford Probe and the lady client says, "Oh, isn't this what the kids drive?" and I, my sphincter tightened (laughs) or whatever you wanna say, and I, um, yeah, I like it cause it's cheap. That just didn't sound right, ya know it did not work in sales. And I said well Jeff I guess you gotta man up and go buy a car because you can't have your clients thinking that you're a kid or less of you cause you don't drive a real car. And I thought it was shallow and I wanted to rage against the machine (laughing) ya know but why. Ya know, rage against the machine all you want on your own time ya know when your selling properties and your doing sales you go with the machine because the machine is what's making the money, so and so I bought myself a BMW right after that and immediately my sales became easier. People questioned me so much less. It was like a phenomenon. Um, all of a sudden I had instant respect because I drove a BMW. (Laughs) I mean I was shocked. I didn't know. Nobody ever told me these things, ya know, how would I have known?

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So, the car you drive affects your sales efforts. Nobody told Jeff straight up. He didn't have a business mentor or parent. Much of what is covered in this book is what he wished somebody had told him. In another tip, I'll cover Jeff elaborating on how and why your car is so important to your confidence. Sustainable confidence comes from nurturing your confidence. Nurturing your confidence starts with noticing when your confidence is waning, to notice your *sphincter*. If you feel your sphincter tightening, notice this and find a way to take action. You don't want to be constipated.

Jeff explained that he noticed his sphincter tighten when he didn't know something about his profession. As opposed to ignoring what he didn't know, which he sees many people going way out of their way to do, he'd go study that crap out of the subject.

JEFF : What I did was work really, really hard...when you're the owner of the company, believe me, you're not sitting on easy-street. You're working harder than anybody else when your the owner. The idea of the fat corporate cat? ... I think that's a poor guy's mantra.

I've seen that actually where a poor guy gets in charge or something and he sticks his feet up on the desk and he is quickly relieved of all that responsibility. (laughing) [Jeff's laughter means the business goes away, goes bankrupt.]. Ya know, [poor folks] want to get there so they don't have to work. Please. Let me say to all you poor people out there. You're not working near as much as the rich people are so. Unless your talking about old money filthy rich, the rich are working really hard.

If I told you the secret to being a millionaire salesman was hard work, you'd laugh at me. Hard work isn't a secret--it's a table stake. Jeff pounds this point. You can skip this next bit if you are already a seven-figure salesperson. There's a lot of hard work to making a lot of money. But, Jeff off-handedly commented to me that the seven-figure sales people often review the basics. He finds an openness and humility to very successful sales people that he doesn't see in most other folks.

JEFF : I see really successful sellers learning and working. It is how they get better than the less successful...learning, learning, learning, learning, working, working, working, working. The harder I work, the luckier I get and the less I have to do later. So my suggestion to all you readers out there is that if you start young, work extremely hard when you're young, cause as you get older you really don't feel like it. (laughs) So stop thinking "This is my life, I gotta enjoy myself." Cause you're full of shit. Cause as you get older, as you get older you really won't feel like it is your life if you don't work hard when you're young. Ya know how many young people, young kids these days (laughs) they say, "I'm not gonna do that!" Ya know, their too good for it. They leave at five o'clock, because that's quitting time. That's great, if your working at 7/11 and you're very comfortable with your life. And you like going to your apartment and turning on your 19-inch TV and what have you.

But if you're a self-employed person ya know I don't I really never work less than half days, ya know nine to nine. (laughs) So, ya know, there's no, there's no set time-frame in real estate or what have you. You have to work and work and work.

People that don't work hard or don't work smart see me as lucky.

When I started out in real estate I used work from seven to midnight. I got a call one time at midnight so this guys name was uh, this guy had a property down in Wilmington, John Cleburne, was his name and the phone rings at midnight and I'm at Fred Sands realtors this is 1988 and uh, I answered the phone and he says, "Wow, I was just gonna leave a message." And I said, "Well I'm here. What do you need?" He said, "Well I have a property on King Street down in Wilmington that I want to sell, it's a four-plex and I needed to know what it was worth." I said, " Well I'm a broker" and I take down the information and then I sold him a property in Sol Mar. So, I guess I was just lucky wasn't I, to be there at midnight? (laughs) The harder I work the luckier I get. (laughs) So the problem with that theory though is that um, seven years I worked everyday every moment, (sings) "every breath you take, every move you make" um, I didn't do anything but work. People would say to me Jeff, ya know, there's other things to talk about than work. Nobody really wanted to hang around me cause all I did was talk about work. I was so enamored and so in love with real estate and success after having been a homeless street kid with no high school education and that I didn't do anything but work.

When I met my um, second wife for the first time she looked into my closet um, and I was still married to my first wife, but um, Christine was living Colorado at that time and I was closing on my company and I was working really hard. She opens up my closet and alls there were, were suits and there was one pair of pink shorts in that closet that were my brother-in-law Marks, that I inherited when he died. It's the only casual clothes that I owned, I owned nothing, but suits. And I didn't realize that. I was shocked when she told me that. And I thought about it and I went wow, ya know and I said I'd better go buy a pair of jeans. And it kinda just changed right then and there. And I took a year off of work and I went snow boarding and fishing in uh, '94, the whole year. I didn't work at all. To speak of. And I learned, I remember sitting in my motor home on Thanksgiving Day, cooking my turkey, looking out the slope of Breckenridge and just feeling really good.

The image I had in my mind as Jeff was telling me this was of a woman jogger, jogging with golden retriever on a leash, a really happy golden retriever. The golden retriever had his leash in his mouth. Sure, he was on a leash, but he was out and jogging and while he was on a leash, he was carrying his own leash. That's the point I was hearing, that the secret to freedom was to carry your own leash.

Finding a balance is critical. When I met Jeff in '95, a year after his year-long vacation, he was almost bankrupt, perilously close to missing alimony payments. We'll get to more of that later. I wanted to understand how I can make my quarter-mil. How I can carry my own leash.

BEN : What are some of the other secrets to sales success or success in selling? What would I need to know for me to make that quarter mill you promised you could teach me earlier?

JEFF : I've found it's easy to forget when teaching somebody the basics of sales because you, when your very successful and you make a lot of money like I do, you think it just came naturally, ya know. (laughs)

But, then I have to go ahead and think back and I realized that this is the way that I found out that I um, that I learned things. I forget what I learned.

I know it's gonna sound kinda funny but I was listening to Sam Kinison and I always thought Sam Kinison was the funniest guy alive. He's dead now, but even, I still think he was the funniest comedian ever. A lot of people won't agree with that and I really don't care, but um, I thought he was hilarious. And so, maybe five years went by and I hadn't really listened to him and um, I put on, I bought his CD and I listened to him and I realized that half my jokes that I say as part of my everyday repertoire were from Sam Kinison, ya know. (laughs) I mean, I yell over to one of my agents, hey Scotty can you come here and bring everything in your desk. That's Sam Kinison, but I didn't remember that that was Sam Kinison.

It's the same thing as sales people. Yeah okay, some people are born sales people, usually we call them shysters, so (laughs) other people are just regular people that like to sell and can talk to people or what have you, but it's not that natural of a thing to be the perfect salesman and so you learn. I wasn't a natural salesman.

And so the way, the way you learn is you listen to the great sales people. You listen to Tony Robbins and um, although I don't really like Tony Robbins that much. I don't like his bouncy attitude thing, but let me tell you, when I'm sitting in my car, I learned something from him that I do. If I'm feeling kind of lousy, smile.

I know this is not Me. This technique is from a sales tape or, or Anthony Hopkins or somebody else that I'd listen to one time or a book that I read. The act of smiling makes me feel better.

So therefore if I'm feeling lousy just before going into an appointment, I smile. Smile, smile, smile. I learned that. What I'm saying is that, through all of these training programs and techniques, "how to swim with sharks and not get eaten alive", "The one minute sales person." Like I said Tony Robbins, all these different sales people, I picked up things from each of them and I learned. I learned a line from each one of them and I became to believe that it was all me. Well I am a culmination of all the things that I've done.

Ben: But you called natural salespeople shysters.

Jeff: I've developed a sales technique that is the art of not selling and that's one that's working for me best right now. And I can tell you what, if the art of not selling anything nots working for me, I'll change it You're learning magic. Prepare yourself for accelerated growth. Buckle up and breathe.

again. Change spurs growth so and anytime you change something you end up growing in some direction. If it's a bad direction, change it. Grow again in a different direction. So, so everything you do, everything you learn, everything you read, everything you listen to, if you apply it in everyday sales, you'll find out if it works really quickly.

Like for example, I heard the word economy of scale one time. I thought economy of scale, what the hell does economy of scale mean, I (laughs) really don't know what that means and so somebody told me that it meant there's more money to be made with less in some ways. So I said to myself, that's interesting. So [I was with a client and] we were walking through an apartment building and they said, "Gees these units are really small." And I said, "Yeah isn't that great?" Now, you might sit there and go well that's a stupid remark and the guy goes, "Well, well what do you mean?" And I said, "Well, the economy of scale is perfect here. People rent small units. A lot of people like small units. Ya know smaller places to live, less to clean, but beyond that, the fact that it's very rentable is the fact that it is for you, it's so much cheaper to carpet, so much cheaper to paint and to take care of because the economy of scale, because it's smaller and you get more rent per square foot and it costs you less in maintenance to run it. That's why I like small units." It just came out of my mouth, but since then I've used that line a lot, and I've never had anybody refute that. So, that's an interesting thing. I mean you can sell anything you want to sell as long as you don't sound like you're selling.

Now does that sound like selling to you? I don't think it does.

To answer Jeff's question now. Yes, that sounds exactly like selling to me. I don't think that Jeff is practicing not-selling. I see Jeff as learning to not come across as a shyster. I'm reminded of words by Larry Beinhart, author of *Wag The Dog*, "Propaganda that sounds like propaganda is second-rate propaganda." What I'm hearing Jeff say is that selling that sounds like selling is second-rate selling.

Jeff is at a stage in his career where he is beginning to sell really expensive properties and to navigate bigger sellers through more complicated deals. The bigger the deal, the less appropriate it is to sound like a salesman.

I think what Jeff is demonstrating is that when you internalize knowledge it no longer feels awkward. That when he feels lousy, he smiles. This has become second nature. It wasn't a natural instinct to smile when he felt lousy. But, through practicing techniques, you continue doing what is effective.

Improving salesmanship becomes the practice of adopting what is effective. Yes, it might not feel natural at first, but if something helps get the job done you do it. You might have an inclination to rage against the machine, but if that is getting in the way of sales, then the professional salesman puts these inclinations aside and does what will be more effective because that what it means to be a professional, you're choosing your actions because you are attempting to make money.

If money is the goal, learn to sell, learn to sell big-ticket items. Making money isn't about being comfortable while you're making money. Making money is about being comfortable later. Making money is about carrying your own leash, or, better yet, being able to forget you've got a leash. Making money is about, well, making money.

JEFF: You need to know your business. That's a given. You learn to see opportunities and bigger opportunities then the real trick is to navigate around the shit.

The biggest thing about making money is focusing on making money. Get rid of what is wasting your time to make more money.

JEFF: When I'm fighting with my wife, I'm just not wanting to deal with the shit. Shit gets in the way of everything, having a life and making money. Drama is shit. Drama is unnecessary tension, tension is friction and friction slows everything down.

Quibbling gets in the way with making money. The best way to make money is to make money quickly.

JEFF: The job of a finance person is not to tell me what I can't do. The job of a finance person is to tell me what they need to get the job done...I don't want to hear their shit. I want them to tell me they will get the financing...if they fuck up once I won't work with them again. I can't afford to.

Jeff explained that by keeping his name clean, clients are willing to move faster with him. And, as he has progressed as a salesman he has evolved to work with folks that are willing to work quickly. It is more valuable to him to give up a commission than to quibble.

JEFF: I've had many situations where I said take my commission you know if you really feel that I didn't represent you, take it. I actually just last year, a client of mine said to me, I never liked this guy first of all, but I've made a lot of money for him and with him. And he said to me, "Jeff you didn't represent me." And, I said, "Yes, I did." He said, "No, you didn't, don't talk to me anymore talk to my attorney." I failed right there because I didn't spend enough time with this particular client that I knew needed a super amount of hand holding, and everything else, and in fact I had become too big for him. While I had made money by working with him, investing time with him now was costing me more than he was worth in potential revenue. It is assessing the opportunity and the opportunity cost that helps you make more money. I already knew who he was.

"What's the point of complaining?" My psychiatrist asked me when I said, "You know, my wife is doing this and she's doing that to me. I can't believe it." And I tell the story of whatever she did, and I say, "I just can't believe it." And he says, "When are you gonna stop being amazed?" And, I said, "What do you mean?" And he said, "You already know what she's doing to you. You know you keep going through the same kind of thing and yet you continue to be shocked."

It's the same thing with your clients. If you know who they are and you know they're an asshole and you're still working with them, why are you complaining? Just learn how to deal with them. I've always said he who ends up with the commission in the end wins. Because you've sold it.

If people could get along they wouldn't need real estate brokers (laughing). They wouldn't need sales people or intermediaries. You are basically a filter for shit. (laughs)

I mean it's kind of an ugly statement, but you're a shit filter as a real estate broker so you don't get anywhere with a client by telling them how bad the other person is because I'll tell you what, they'll stop wanting to work and cooperate. If you tell them the buyer, that the seller is an asshole then the buyer is eventually gonna believe it and not want to be working with this guy. Then your job is doubley hard. So keep it in and filter it clean ya know.

BEN : That's your primary job as a salesman?

JEFF : Right, it really is. Filter the shit out.

This concludes the guided tour. Please see the forum for ongoing activities.

Thank you for your considerations. Now, let's go make some money.

-Ben